THE PATH OF THE CONQUISTADORES

LINDON BATES, JR.

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THE PATH OF THE CONQUISTADORES

SIMON BOLIVAR, "EL LIBERTADOR"

FROM A PAINTING BY FRANCIS M. DREXEL

Sioux Center, Iowa 51250

THE PATH OF THE CONQUISTADORES

TRINIDAD AND VENEZUELAN GUIANA

BY

LINDON BATES, JR

AUTHOR OF "THE RUSSIAN ROAD TO CHINA," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

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From a painting by Francis M. Drexel. By permission of Mrs. John Duncan Emmet.

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THE PATH OF THE CONQUISTADORES

I

THE CONQUISTADORES

SIX battered caravels were slowly nearing the coast of South America. Their planking, warped and parched by weeks of sailing beneath the torrid sun, showed gaping seams. Long strings of weeds trailed from their sides. They were in momentary danger of sinking from their leaks. None had more than one cask of water.

On the narrow poop-deck of the largest vessel stood a tall, gaunt, lonely figure. His long white hair hung lankly down.

His eyes were bloodshot from endless watching. His painful movements witnessed the rackings of gout. His harsh features betrayed the anxiety which his iron resolution would hide from his men.

It was the last day of July, 1489. Weeks of sailing, of hardship, of waiting, of hope deferred, had told on commander and crew. The latter were in a state of mutinous panic. Hungrily the Admiral peered ahead over the tropic sea.

Suddenly a sailor at the masthead cried aloud, "Land! land!" The crew crowded to the rail. Dimly, in the distance, on the port quarter, appeared the summits of three mountains.

"Change the course; put in!" ordered the Admiral.

The caravels swung slowly around and headed inshore. As the fleet drew nearer it was seen that the three peaks were united upon one base.

"A miracle!" exclaimed one of the

sailors. "To-day is Trinity Sunday, and yonder is the Trinity."

"Trinidad we shall call this land," said the Admiral.

By evening the vessels were close to shore. The men on the decks of the caravels could see huts nestled among the palms and people moving on the beach.

"It is fresh and green as the gardens of Valencia in the month of March," exclaimed one of the men joyfully.

Skirting the shore of the Island of Trinidad, the vessels reached the entrance to the Gulf of Paria. Across the strait could be dimly descried the mainland of South America.

"Out with the anchors," called the commander. "This current is making a roaring noise like the sound of breakers against the rocks."

The ships hove to and anchored off the Point of Arenal. The perilous passage between the island and the continent,

"The Serpent's Mouth," lay ahead. The tired sailors ate their scanty meal of mouldy biscuit and then, wearied out, slept. Columbus watched on.

"In the dead of night," he later wrote to Ferdinand of Spain, "while I was on deck I heard an awful roaring that came from the south towards the ship. I stopped to observe what it might be, and I saw the sea rolling from west to east like a mountain as high as the ship. To this day I have a vivid recollection of the dread I then felt lest the ship might founder under the force of that tremendous sea. But it passed by, and on the following day it pleased the Lord to give us a favourable wind, and I passed inward through that Strait, and soon came to still water. In fact, some water which was drawn up from the sea proved to be fresh."

Over waves darkened with silt brought down by the mighty Orinoco from the

distant Andes, the Admiral sailed into the Gulf of Paria. He landed on the western coast of Trinidad and renewed his stock of fresh water. Then through the northern passage, the Dragon's Mouth, he sailed to the Island of Margarita. Indians were fishing here. The Admiral sent some of his sailors to get food for the ships. To their surprise and delight the men found that the natives were diving for oysters which contained pearls. The Indian women who came out in coriaras to the ship were festooned with gems. Sailors were sent on shore. One of them exchanged an earthenware plate for four strings of pearls. The cacique of the island gave the visitors heaping handfuls.

"Men, we have reached the richest country in the world," exclaimed the Discoverer.

So came the first of the Conquistadores, and the fatality that followed them one and all found in him its earliest victim.

The Path of the Conquistadores

Even while Columbus was opening to Spain the untold wealth of the New World, intriguers at Court were tearing at his favour with the King. He was accused of secreting the bulk of the treasure due to the Sovereign, of trying to keep for himself the Pearl Island, of plotting to destroy all other Spaniards. Ferdinand sent a judge, secretly an enemy, to investigate. Columbus saw the documents which might have evidenced his good faith confiscated, the treasure ready for transportation to Spain seized. In crowning indignity, he and his brother were put into irons and sent home. The vessel's captain would have released the Admiral's bonds on the way. Proudly Columbus refused to have the irons removed save by the royal order. When the vessel reached Cadiz, Ferdinand made what reparation he could. But ever after the Discoverer kept the fetters in his chamber, and directed that at

his death they should be buried with him.

In the wake of Columbus came year by year a swarm of adventurers seeking the fabled wealth of the Indies. In their turn they found gold ornaments, pearls, and emeralds in possession of the Indians. Alonzo de Ojeda reached the Bay of Maracaibo and named the land Venezuela, because the huts of the natives, built on piles, reminded him of the Queen of the Adriatic. Places on the Island of Trinidad, in Margarita, and the mainland of South America were precariously occupied by Spaniards, who first trafficked with, then oppressed, then enslaved the natives.

None have more graphically described the conditions of this period of ruthless conquest than the Dominican Friar, Bartholomew de Las Casas, writing forty years after the discovery.

"In the yeere 1526, the King our

Soveraigne, being induced by Sinister informations and perswasions damageable to the State, as the Spaniards have alwaies pained themselves to concele from his Majestie the damages and dishonours which God and the Soules of men, and his State doth receive in the Indies, granted a great Realme, greater than all Spaine, Venezuela, with the government and entire jurisdiction, unto certain Dutch Merchants, the Welzers of Augsburg.

"These same entering the country with three hundred men, they found the people very amiable, and meeke as Lambes, as they are all in those parts of the Indies until the Spaniards doe outrage them. These have leyd desolate a most fertile land full of people. They have slayne and wholly discomfited great and divers nations, so farre forth as to abolish the languages wont to be spoken. They have slayne, destroyed, and sent to hell by

divers and strange manners of cruelties and ungodlinesses more I suppose than four or five millions of souls.

"On the Ile of Trinitie, which joyneth with the firme land of the Coast of Paria and where the people are the best disposed and most inclined to vertue, in their kind, of all the Indians, there went a Captaine Rover in the yeere 1510 accompanied with sixty or seventie other pettie Theeves. The Indians received them as their oune bowels and babes. The Spaniards builded a great house of timber and perswaded the Indians to enter. Then laying hands on their swords they began to threaten the Indians, naked as they were, to kill them if theye did stirre, and then bound them. And those which fled, they hewed them in pieces. There were an hundred and forescore persons of them which they had bound. They got them to the Ile of St. John, where they sold the one moitie, and thence to the

Ile of Hispaniola, where they sold the other moitie.

"As I reprehended the captain for this notable treason he made an answer:—

"'Sir, quiet yourself for that matter. So have they commanded me to do and given me instruction. But I never found father nor mother save in this Ile of Trinitie in respect of the friendly courtesy the Indians showed me.'

"They have singled out at times from all this coast, which was very well peopled, above two millions of souls. It is a tried case that, of Indians so robbed, they cast the third part into the sea. For they prepare but a very small deal of sustenance and water. Wherefore they die for hunger and thirst, and then there is none other remedie but to cast them over the Boord into the sea. And verily a man among them did tell me, that from the Ile of Lucayos unto the Ile of Hispaniola there trended a ship all

alongst, without that it had either compasse or Mariner's Card, being guided onely by the tracks of dead Indians' carkasses floating upon the seas.

"The tyrannie which the Spanish exercise over the Indians is one of the cruellest things that is in the World. There is no hell in this life nor other desperate state in this World that may be compared unto it."

Again and again the Indians rebelled. With hideous cruelties they tortured the Spaniards who fell into their hands, pouring molten gold down their throats, crying, "Eat! eat gold, Christian!" But the arms and discipline of the Spaniards were in the end always victorious.

The behaviour of the Friars during this period is of everlasting credit to them and to their Church. Massacred in numbers by the infuriated natives, who could not differentiate between the monks and the savage oppressors of

the same race, scorned and bullied by the soldiers and the adventurers, these devoted men did their best to alleviate the lot of the Indians. Las Casas reached the Emperor Charles V, and pleaded, at first in vain, the cause of Christianity. Father Roderic Minaia appealed to the Pope, who loosed the thunders of a Bull upon the oppressors. Armed with the papal mandate, the Friars again approached Charles V, who was at last persuaded to send an honest man to investigate. Upon the latter's report, he decreed at once the freedom of all Indian slaves. Despite the seriousness of the blow to Spanish industries in the New World and the protests of his officials, it was executed with a fair degree of loyalty. The lot of the Indians was never again quite what it had been before.

During the half century after the discovery the Spaniards had been mostly on islands or near the coast. As time went

on they came into touch with the tribes of the interior.

The conquests of Mexico, Peru, and New Granada in turn poured millions of money into Spain, firing the imagination of every man. The idea of a great civilized nation in the interior of South America, richer than any yet conquered, started from the legends of the Indians. Their statement that gold came from far inland fructified readily in minds fallow to marvels. Thus sprouted and grew with tropic luxuriance the belief in El Dorado.

In his letter to Cardinal Bempo, the chronicler Oviedo records clearly and as actual fact the existence of "A great King, bruited in those lands, covered with golden powder, in such fashion that from head to foot he was like a figure of gold, graven by the hand of a rare artificer. The gold is stuck to his body by an aromatic resin. But since this would irk him as he slept, every night the King bathes and every

morning once more is he gilded, which shows that the Kingdom of El Dorado is marvellously rich in mines."

A great city, "Manoa," on the shores of a lake called Parime, palaces with columns of massive gold, soldiers "armados de piecas y joyas de oro,"—endless were the details filling in the picture of the realm of the Gilded Man.

Rumour was precise about everything save the location of the city of Manoa. Some tales placed it at the foot of the Andes, in the highlands of Peru or New Granada. Some in Guiana, far up the Caroni River, which joins the Orinoco just before the latter spreads out into the great delta. When the Andes region had been crossed, so often and so fruitlessly, the hopes of the goldseekers turned and still clung to the location on the Caroni of which Milton wrote:—

> "Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
> Call El Dorado."

The Conquistadores

The famous map of Hondius showed definitely in Guiana the huge lake of Parime and the Golden City of Manoa on its border.

The first expedition up the Orinoco was that of Diego de Ordez. He was one of the Conquistadores of Mexico, granted the right to bear on his coat of arms the Burning Mountain of Popocatapetl. He was named Adelantado of all the country he could conquer between the Amazon and the Welzers' concession in Venezuela. In his venture he saw "emeralds as big as a man's fist." Far up the Orinoco he heard of "a mighty king with one eye, and animals like deer that are ridden as horses." Along the Caura he saw natives who anointed themselves with turtle fat and powdered themselves with glittering mica. His trip gave a considerable impetus to the belief that here at last was to be found El Dorado.

Next came, with a great expedition of

two thousand, Don Antonio de Berrio y Oruna, son-in-law of the Conquistador of New Granada, Ximinez de Quesada. Landowners in Spain sold their family estates to accompany him. Ten secular ecclesiastics and twelve Observantin monks joined the adventurer. The cacique of Marequita, which bordered the Orinoco near where San Felix now stands, came to Cumana at about the same time with a mass of golden images to trade. This event and the story of one Juan Martinez, who said that he had been captured by Indians on the expedition of Ordez and had been taken from town to town until he had actually reached "the Imperial and Golden City of Manoa" and had seen the "Inca of Guiana," inflamed the party to the highest point. De Berrio's expedition started from Marequita southward into Paragua.

Thirty men of the two thousand ultimately straggled back. De Berrio retired, crushed and bankrupt in every-

thing save hope, to Trinidad, and made his headquarters in Port of Spain.

Here, in 1594, there appeared an Englishman, Captain Widdhon, who landed and made many inquiries, to the great suspicion of the Governor. Eight of his sailors disappeared in Trinidad. Captain Widdhon left as mysteriously as he had come. He was the scout for Sir Walter Raleigh.

On March 22, 1595, with an imposing force, Elizabeth's favourite himself cast anchor outside of Port of Spain. Should he attack the Spaniards, breaking his Queen's peace, or sail on? Long and serious was the discussion with his officers. Then he took his decision. "To depart four hundred or five hundred miles from my ships and leave a garrison in my back, interested in the same enterprise, which daily expected supplies from Spain, I should savour very much of an ass." He ordered an immediate attack.

On the excuse that the eight missing sailors had been murdered by the Spaniards Raleigh surprised Port of Spain and slaughtered its garrison. Then, sending Captain Colfield with sixty men and following himself with forty, he marched to St. Joseph, stormed it, and captured the Governor, de Berrio.

The latter was carried up the Orinoco in the hope that he might be able to supply information. This first expedition of Raleigh's was, however, an utter failure. The falls of the Caroni prevented a passage up its stream. The tropic jungle was impenetrable. Raleigh returned to Trinidad, released de Berrio, and sailed sadly home.

De Berrio moved over to San Thomé, now Los Castillos, on the Orinoco, and established a settlement preparatory to another march inland. Shortly afterwards he died, worn out with hardship, defeat, and disappointment. Twice more Raleigh sent out expeditions—one in 1596, under

RALEIGH'S ATTACK ON PORT-OF-SPAIN

Lawrence Keymis, another in 1597. Despite Von Humboldt's polite sneer, Raleigh did actually find a great gold region, as the millions taken of late years from the Callao mine attest. Rather too imaginatively, however, he wrote, on his return :—

"Every mountain, every stone in the forests of the Orinoco shines like the precious metals. If it be not gold, it is the mother of gold."

Meanwhile word was constantly carried to Europe of the riches of Guiana. Francis Sparry, left behind on Sir Walter's expedition, captured by Spaniards and taken through much of Guiana, drifted back to England.

"In the province of Guiana," he testified, "is much natural and fine gold, which runneth between the stones like veines. Of which gold I had some store, but now the Spaniard is the better for it.

"Camalaha is a place where they sell

Women at certain times, in the manner of a Faire. In this faire, which is to the south of Orinoco, I bought eight young women, the eldest whereof I thinke never saw eighteene yeeres, fore one red-hafted knife which in England cost mee one halfe-pennie. I gave these Women away to certain Salvages which were my friends." An alluring prospect for the adventurous!

To Raleigh the Gilded Man still beckoned. In 1617, in person, he led a final search for Manoa. It was a last and a desperate gamble. Once more he was to beard the King of Spain. James stood ready to profit by success or to disavow failure. On New Year's Day, 1618, Raleigh's men under Keymis landed at San Thomé. A brave and wary Spaniard, Geronimo de Grados, laid an ambuscade for the English, who had intended to land merely, and not attack until next day.

"The common sort," says Raleigh, "were so amazed as had not the Captains

and some other valiant gentlemen made a head and encouraged the rest, they had all been broken and cut to pieces."

The Spaniards, after a sharp engagement, fell back, and were reinforced by a new band, led by Diego Palomegue, the Governor. Young Walter Raleigh, son of the Admiral, rallied the English. He was shot by an arquebuse ball, and, as he stood reeling, was felled with the butt-end of a gun.

"Go on: may the Lord have mercy on me and prosper your enterprise!" he cried to Keymis. These were his last words.

The Spaniards were broken at last; their refuge, the monastery of St. Francis, was stormed, and Raleigh's men sailed up the Orinoco as far as the Narrows, where Ciudad Bolivar now stands. Sir Walter landed at Soledad, climbed the hill, looked over the Orinoco stretching away into the west like a silver ribbon, and then turned back.

Keymis committed suicide after the failure of this expedition. Sir Walter was executed on October 29, 1618. King James wavered, but the Spanish King was insistent upon his enemy's death. "'Tis a sharp medicine, but a sound cure for all diseases," Sir Walter said as he felt the axe's edge.

Spain strengthened her grip on the continent. She gradually worked inland, fighting and conquering the Indians, attacked herself at sea by adventurous pirates and admirals. Her dominion in Venezuela was never again, however, seriously challenged by a European foe.

With Trinidad the history was different. The island was surprised in 1640 by the Dutch, who "found no booty"; in 1672 by Sir Tobias Bridges, who came over from Barbados to assault it. In 1677 the French under the Marquis de Maintenon, aided by some pirates from Tortuga, made a landing and carried away

as plunder a hundred thousand "pieces-of-eight." In 1687 the Carib Indians revolted, murdering the Governor and most of the whites on the island. In 1690 Levassor de la Touche, and in 1716 Blackbeard Tench the pirate, attacked Trinidad. Small wonder that in 1773 only 162 male adult whites were recorded as living on the island.

A French resident of Grenada, M. de Saint-Laurent, became, in 1778, the real founder of Trinidad. So impressed was he with its fertility that he bought a large area of land, drew up a Bill of Rights, or Cedula, got it approved by Spain in 1783, and secured the appointment of an excellent Governor, Don José Maria Chacon.

In five years the population jumped to 10,422, mostly French settlers from the neighbouring West India Islands. Toussaint l'Ouverture's rebellion of 1793 in Haiti added another set of French

refugees, and in 1795 still others came from the West India Islands, newly captured by the British.

In 1797 a British fleet sailed through the Dragon's Mouth with twenty vessels and seven thousand men for the conquest of Trinidad. Sir Ralph Abercrombie's force so overwhelmingly exceeded Governor Chacon's that the latter burned his ships and surrendered without firing a shot. Colonel Thomas Picton was left behind as Governor.

Whip in hand, Picton stalked grimly into the easygoing administrative offices of the island. In front of the Government House stood his gallows for grafters. The road-contractors trembled for his grim unheralded visits. The cowed thieves feared his police hardly less than his police feared their iron taskmaster. A population increased from 17,000 in 1793 to 29,000 in 1803 witnessed the order and prosperity which his man-of-war discipline produced.

His reward was an impeachment for malfeasance in office. Acquitted, but under a cloud of suspicion as bitterly unjust as history has ever recorded, Picton left to fight through the Peninsular War with Wellington, and to perish gloriously at Waterloo at the head of the "thin red line" of three thousand which repulsed D'Erlon's sixteen thousand charging grenadiers.

The frigate "Victory," with a lean, one-eyed Admiral on her deck, sailed by in 1805. She was flagship of thirteen British men-of-war that had hounded twenty-eight French and Spanish vessels from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean. The inhabitants of Port of Spain, taking his fleet for an invading enemy, got under arms. But the Admiral sailed out anew to Martinique and back again across the Atlantic, still wolfishly pursuing the allied fleet. He met it at Trafalgar.

Thus passed the last of the English

conquerors, leaving Trinidad to grow into the ways of peace. Venezuela had not the good fortune of the island. She had still to live through tempestuous years.

In the latter part of March, 1817, a score of horsemen were riding towards Angostura from the northern sea-coast, some on mules, some on mangy horses. Most were sallow-skinned creoles clad in civilian dress, sombrero on head, sword and pistol at the belt; a few wore dingy uniforms. One, a gigantic negro, bore the insignia of an officer of the Black Republic of Haiti. Two, military of bearing, keen of eye, had the weather-worn red of the British Grenadiers; half a dozen barefoot peons in ragged ponchos rode behind with the sumpter burros.

A slight figure in faded blue regimentals faced with red led the band. Only thirty-four years old, he looked fifty. His dark and wrinkled face was drawn and

puckered. Hardship, dissipation, and the bitterest disappointment had left their marks.

Born of a noble and wealthy Caracas family, he had been sent to Europe at the age of sixteen. He had visited France, then under the Consulate, still vibrant with the recent revolution; he had played and beaten at tennis the Prince of the Asturias, against whom as Ferdinand VII of Spain he was now in a duel to the death for the freedom of South America. He had married at the age of nineteen and been widowed within the year. He had returned to Paris and broken his health in wild living. At Rome he had refused to kiss the Cross on Pius VII's shoe. He had returned to Caracas and had taken part in the Junta which drove out Emperan, the Spanish Captain-General, forced the establishment of a National Congress, and drafted the declaration of Rights of April 19, 1810—celebrated now as the Vene-

zuelan national holiday. He had gone to England and had brought back the banished General Miranda. He had with his "Societa Patriotica" secured the Declaration of Independence of July 5, 1811. He had fought against the Royalists, been overwhelmingly beaten, and fled to Cartagena. He had returned while Spain was in the throes of conflict with Napoleon, and entered Caracas amid delirious enthusiasm in a chariot before which girls strewed roses, hailing him "El Libertador." He had been defeated once more and had been obliged to flee to Jamaica. A negro spy, hired to assassinate him, had killed his secretary by mistake. Now at length, by the aid of a Dutch ship-owner and the President of the Negro Republic of Haiti, he had been enabled to come back on this final attempt at South American liberation.

"A monkey" ("Mono") he was once nicknamed, and not unlike a monkey he seemed

with his thin little body and his wrinkled face. But one look from his dark brooding eyes told of the fiery, unconquerable soul that burned in the slight frame. The man was Simon Bolivar, the Washington of Spanish America. On this March day in 1817, heading his tattered little cavalcade, he was passing through the anguish of his Valley Forge.

The sky behind was reddened with the fires of Barcelona. The four hundred devoted troops left to hold the Franciscan monastery had been butchered to a man, and the Spaniards were giving the city to the sack. One thousand of the townspeople had been massacred, some on the altar steps. Women and children were being hunted through the streets. Dogs roamed the by-ways eating their fill of the neglected bodies.

Nor was Barcelona alone. Town after town that had given the Revolutionist harbour had fallen to the Royalists and

had suffered a like fate. Boves, the butcher, condemned as a "ladron del mar," a renegade Revolutionist leading a band of desperadoes which the Spaniards themselves nicknamed "The Corps of Hell"; Rosete, with his branding-iron "R" for the foreheads of Republicans; Morales, whom even Boves had called "Atrocious"—these were all in the pay of Spain. Before them fell the town of Acumare. Its streets were left a shambles of the dead and the dying. Old men, women, and children lay with the rest. Valencia surrendered upon the oath of Boves, sworn in the presence of the Holy Sacrament, to respect the lives of everybody, yet as soon as arms had been surrendered, the Governor, ninety of the leading citizens, sixty-four officers, and three hundred and ten troops were slaughtered. Caracas surrendered to Boves on similar terms, which were similarly observed. Boves issued an order that any who had conspired against Spain

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should be shot and the slaughter recommenced. Aragua was stormed and some three thousand townspeople were massacred.

Now Barcelona, the last of Venezuela's northern cities, had fallen, and all that were left to follow Bolivar were fifteen officers and a few peons as their servants. Help from abroad there was almost none. President Madison had issued an order forbidding any aid from United States citizens to the struggling Revolutionists. Great Britain stood apathetically by her ally, Spain. The feeble little Negro Republic of Haiti alone had lent support in men and money, asking in return only Bolivar's promise, which he loyally kept, to give freedom to the slaves of Venezuela.

In the Colonies themselves even, pitifully few were his sympathizers. The white population in Venezuela, but two hundred thousand in number, was practically the only element in the country interested in

any way in the outcome of the struggle. These native-born creoles, tyrannized over by the arbitrary power of the Viceroys and Spanish officials, excluded from office and emolument, while their trade and manufacturing were garrotted by prohibitive laws, were in general dissatisfied with Spanish misrule, but were averse to the fearful sacrifice which resistance entailed. The King had refused to the Venezuelans permission to found a University in Maracaibo, because, in the opinion of his Fiscal, "it was unsuitable to promote learning in Southern America, where the inhabitants appeared destined by nature to work in the mines." The making of wine and oil, the growth of almonds or grapes, the manufacture of cloth, trade with the outside world or even with any Spanish port, other than Seville, were prohibited. Oppressed by these abuses, the native whites still refrained from rallying in any great number to Bolivar.

The Indians, two hundred and seven thousand in number, stigmatized as "a race of monkeys, filled with vice and ignorance, automatons unworthy of representing or of being represented"; the negro slaves, sixty thousand in number, and the mixed bloods, forty-three thousand souls in all, though their grievances were far greater than those of the native whites, for the most part simply followed as they were led or paid.

With but a small portion of the creole population as its support, the Revolution was imperilled hourly by the insatiable vanities and jealousies of the rival leaders. The Libertador had heard ring in his ears the cry of the mob at Guiria, "Down with Bolivar—up with Mariño and Bermudez!" Would liberty never come? Was this river of blood all that the years of devoted effort were to bring? Bolivar at the front of his twenty men hung his head in the agony of defeat and failure.

"Halt, halt!" whispered one of the riders suddenly; "what is that glitter beyond the trees?"

A horse neighed to the right of the party.

"An ambuscade!" cried hoarsely the first of the red-coated officers.

The drooping figure of Bolivar stiffened, the dark eyes flashed, he turned in his saddle. Then in a voice of thunder he cried:

"Columns extend right and left! Attack on both flanks."

It was an order to an imaginary force behind. The officers of his escort repeated the order and rode forward, discharging their pistols. The ambuscade melted away. The Spaniards, inferring a superior force, had taken flight.

The insurgent party continued southward. As it marched, here and there wild llaneros and peons were drafted in by payment, promise, or impressment. With a force swelled to some hundreds, Bolivar reached the Orinoco. In the city of

CELEBRATION OF THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF VENEZUELA'S INDEPENDENCE AT CIUDAD BOLIVAR

Angostura, to be later renamed in his honour Ciudad Bolivar, he surprised and blockaded the feeble Spanish garrison.

Piar, the mulatto chief of a band of Republican cut-throats who had combined patriotism with profit by seizing the persons and property of the Capuchin Friars along the Caroni, now joined Bolivar. The latter sent him to attack San Felix. The bloodthirsty but efficient half-breed defeated the Spanish garrison and took prisoner the Governor, seventy-five officers, and two hundred men, all of whom he remorselessly slaughtered.

Fearing now lest the monks whom Piar had captured would embarrass his movements, Bolivar sent a message to one of the mulatto's officers in charge, saying:—

"Transport the prisoners to La Divina Pastora."

The officer, not knowing of the town thus named, and supposing that he was to send the monks to "the Divine

Shepherdess" in heaven, forthwith massacred them all. Neither of these atrocities was punished. Of such deeds was the war. Murder marched alike with Royalist and Revolutionist.

On July 17th the weak Spanish forces abandoned Angostura and Los Castillos. The Orinoco was in the possession of the Revolutionists. Bolivar's joy was intense. The capture of Angostura marked the turning-point in this struggle, as the capture of Trenton had signalled the turn of the tide for Washington.

A few days after the capture of Angostura, Bolivar's staff met in the thick-walled house which lodged the Libertador. The members of his provisional Cabinet were there—Zea, Martinez, Brion, Colonel Wilson, commander of the "Red Hussars," the English Dr. Moore.

A map lay on the table before them, blue pins locating the Royalist troops. These occupied Cartagena, Valencia,

Caracas, Barcelona, the cities all along the north coast. A few red pins showed the scattered centres of the Revolutionists: Santander in New Granada; Mariño and Bermudez on the north-east, opposite Trinidad; Arismendi on the Island of Margarita. What was to be the next move?

"I propose that we stay here and meet the troops sent against us," suggested Zea.

Colonel Wilson objected. "The Spaniards will beat Mariño and Bermudez one after the other and then overwhelm us."

"The Colonel is right," insisted Bolivar. "We must strike while they are separated."

"Join Bermudez and Mariño in the north-east," counselled Martinez; "march westward along the coast and attack Morillo. He had only seven hundred Spaniards on the island when he attacked Arismendi."

Bolivar shook his head. "Better fight alone than with them. They will sacrifice me, the Republic, and anything else to their vanity and love of power. You know

how Bermudez drew his sword on me at Guiria and the plots to kill me."

There was silence for a moment; the fate of Spanish South America hung on the decision. A rattle of hoofs sounded outside. A rough voice demanded admission.

"I would see General Bolivar; I come from Uncle Paez," called the mounted figure.

"Bring him here," said Bolivar.

A half-breed llanero, barefooted, clad in dirty cotton shirt and trousers, his head thrust through a great blue poncho, shambled in before the Council.

"Which is Bolivar?" he asked; the leader was pointed out, and the llanero approached and put his hand familiarly on the officer's shoulder—the undisciplined plainsman's greeting.

"Uncle Paez sends me to you to tell that the unconquered Bravos de Apure, with a thousand llaneros, will ride with you against the Spaniard."

The members of the Council looked at each other. Paez with his vaqueros, roving over the boundless plains of the interior, from which for four years he had been harrying the Spanish outposts, was hardly known to most of these Caraceños and Margaritans, though Bolivar had heard of his exploits in New Granada.

Bolivar seized the map. "Where is Paez?" he cried.

"By the Apure, near San Fernando," said the peon.

In a flash the Libertador's mind was made up. He turned to the llanero:

"Ride to General Paez and say I march to join him."

He rose to his feet and pointed to the map. "See, señores, here lies our route. We hold in Angostura the gateway to the Orinoco. As far as Santa Fé de Bogota there is no force to oppose us along the line of the Orinoco and Apure. We are in the rear of the enemy, whose

strength is in the coast towns. Here we have cattle and horses. Here we can raise recruits from the llaneros, who care not for whom they fight and who are for us now that Boves is gone. If beaten, we can retreat like Tartars to the immeasurable plains. We will march to Apure and join Paez"—he hesitated. "Morillo will come down thus from the North in haste. We will meet him"—his finger halted, then pointed to the plain near Calabozo, "we will meet him here. Now gather our forces and organize. This is the death-grapple."

Recruits flocked to Bolivar's standard. To pay them he confiscated the property of all Spaniards. The blood-stained Piar, found plotting against Bolivar, as Lee against Washington, was more summarily treated. He was shot and his force was attached to Bolivar's own. With two thousand infantry and one thousand cavalry the leader started from Angostura on the 31st

December, 1817, up the Orinoco. Bolivar was joined on the way by his fugitive lieutenant, Zaraza, and a remnant of men. On January 31st, he united with General Paez and added one thousand cavalry and two hundred and fifty infantry to his army.

Together they marched against Morillo. At El Dimante the Apure River barred their way. If it were not passed their sudden attack on Morillo would be checked, and the Spaniard could rally his forces. Moored to the opposite bank was a Spanish gunboat, three flat-bottomed flecheras, and several canoes. Bolivar paced up and down nervously.

"You have brought me here, General Paez; how will you get me across?" he asked querulously.

"On those flecheras over there," said Paez nonchalantly.

Bolivar looked after him in amazement. Paez had already gone to his llaneros.

"We must have those flecheras, children," he cried; "who will come with Uncle Paez and capture them?"

"Choose whom you want, Uncle," was the answering shout.

Fifty llaneros he picked out. On horseback, lance in hand, they entered the stream and swam into the current. Two men were seized by caimans and dragged below as Bolivar's force breathlessly watched them. The forty-eight reached the flecheras and the gunboat, the Spaniards too surprised to resist seriously. In a tumult of triumph the boats were sailed across the river. On February 12th, Bolivar appeared before the surprised Morillo near Calabozo. The small Spanish force was attacked, beaten, and massacred without quarter.

Then the fortunes of war turned against the Libertador. He was driven back to the Orinoco. But reinforcements had begun to come in now that he held firmly

the great river artery. Several hundred blacks from Haiti joined him. An Irish Legion came, commanded by General Devereux, and a British officer, "English" by name, one of Wellington's trusted subordinates, arranged for the equipment and shipment of twelve hundred good troops. Most of these were soldiers of fortune, veterans left without congenial occupation at the close of the Napoleonic wars.

Notable among the volunteers was Francis M. Drexel, of Philadelphia, an Austrian portrait painter, who later, with Bolivar's backing, was to found the great banking house of which John Pierpont Morgan is now the head.

By the end of 1818 Bolivar had won out sufficiently to issue a call for the Congress of Angostura to meet on January 1, 1819, to frame a Republican form of government and replace the military dictatorship.

The magnificent dream of the Libertador now took shape. It was to erect upon the

ruins of Spanish power a great centralized Republic, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Caribbean Sea to the valley of the Amazon, covering all of Northern South America. Against the party that desired to carve up this vast territory into a number of small sovereign States loosely confederated, Bolivar threw the whole weight of his vast influence. He pleaded before the Congress: "I have been obliged to beg you to adopt centralization and the union of all the States in a Republic one and indivisible."

The Congress wavered and then sided with Bolivar. There was decreed a unified Republic, including what are now the Republics of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. Of this Empire, named Greater Colombia, Bolivar was chosen the first President.

The ideal of the Libertador had triumphed. But the bulk of this domain was yet to be conquered. The first assault

was planned against the Spaniards in the north-west, in New Granada.

Here the flames of resistance had been kept alight by General Santander, with whose ragged band it was Bolivar's immediate purpose to unite. By the middle of June, 1819, this preliminary move had been successfully taken.

But the Andes had yet to be crossed, and at the worst time of the year. The passage of the Cordilleras with a tattered and steadily diminishing handful of famished men was an act of desperate courage. It meant four weeks of weary climbing over snow-capped peaks and through freezing torrents. The road traversed by the poor wretches was marked by crosses in memory of those who had perished in the snow sierras. But beyond these awful mountains lay the smiling plains of New Granada, and its populace was friendly to the Patriot cause.

Disregarding all recognized rules of the

game of war, Bolivar, who was in terrible need of provisions and arms, determined to leave the enemy across his line of communications and make direct for the important town of Tunja. It was taking a risk, but a necessary risk, and one that was completely justified by the result. For Barriero, the Spanish general, conceiving that he must fight for the defence of Tunja, gave Bolivar battle at Boyaea and was utterly routed. Barriero broke his sword across his knee and surrendered, with many officers and some sixteen hundred men. The Patriot army had to mourn the loss of only thirteen killed and fifty-three wounded.

Everywhere now Bolivar was victorious. He marched to Bogota, from which Samano, the Spanish Viceroy, fled.

Returning eastward, he fought the desperate battle of Carabobo, which finally freed Venezuela from the Spanish yoke. The dogged heroism of the British

Legion, which lost a third of its men and two commanders in succession, saved the day. As Bolivar rode past their shattered ranks that night he hailed them "Sal vadores de mi patria." All of its survivors were made on the field of battle members of the "Order of Liberators."

On into Peru went Bolivar, proclaimed Dictator by the inhabitants. On the field of Ayacucho, while the Dictator was absent, his second in command, General Sucre, fought and won a last great battle in which the Spanish army was completely routed and dispersed. The ground for miles was strewn with the silver helmets of the Spanish hussars.

Ayacucho, the death-blow to Spanish power in South America, was the culminating point of Bolivar's career. Dictator of Peru, President of Greater Colombia, Organizer of the new State of Bolivia, his authority extended over a territory two-thirds as large as Europe. He had

indignantly rejected all suggestions for monarchy and a personal dynasty. As the Libertador he had fought to free, not to enslave. For one brief moment as splendid a vision as man has ever cherished was real —the great South American Republic.

Almost in an hour the whole structure fell. Against him rose the generals who had shared his glory, Santander in New Granada, Paez in Venezuela. Sucre, dissatisfied, abandoned Bolivia. Peru demanded the end of the dictatorship. Bolivar's ungrateful fellow-countrymen cried out against his inordinate ambition. In his home city of Caracas an attempt was made to assassinate him.

Attacked on all sides by those whom he had befriended and raised to power, Bolivar resigned from the Presidency and retired to Cartagena. Even here the enmity of jealous hate hounded him. He prepared to leave South America for a refuge in the West India Islands. But

before he could sail the end had come. Exhausted by the terrible exertions of his life of warfare, broken in spirit, bankrupt in hope, he died in December, 1830, at the age of forty-seven. So little had he personally profited by his supreme position that he had to be buried at the expense of his friends.

Thus ended the long line of Conquistadores who battled for Trinidad and Guiana. For each was the draught of bitterness after all his heroism and all his glory. Columbus carried back to Spain in irons, De Berrio dead of disappointment, Raleigh executed by his treacherous King, Picton brought to trial for peculation, Nelson falling for a nation that refused his last prayer, Bolivar dying despised and penniless in the country he had freed,—tragedy, grim and relentless, had marched side by side with the Conquistadores.

II

TRINIDAD

THE green slopes of Tobago, where the shipwreck of the real Alexander Selkirk inspired the "Robinson Crusoe" of Defoe, have been left behind in the dark mists of the Caribbean. Ahead lies a shadowy range of mountain peaks, growing every moment more clear as the dawn lights up their densely wooded sides and outlines the trees that crown their crests.

A rush of crimson heralds the sun. The hills to the east slowly separate as the steamer forges on, and a narrow strait, the Dragon's Mouth, opens out. In the distance, to starboard, stretch Venezuela and the South American mainland. The

island of Trinidad, now close at hand, lies to port.

The dazzling brilliance of the tropic sunrise sows the dark sea with glittering flame points. We go always nearer to the land. Suddenly a narrow passage, the Boco de Monos, appears, bending sharply to the left. Into it the "Marrowijne" turns. Through this channel the tidal current sweeps with a force that has piled many a ship upon the impending cliffs. The red-bearded Dutch captain and the first officer keep anxious watch, one on each side of the bridge. The crew stand alert at their stations.

Gaunt black crags pierced by wave-hewn caverns, festooned with vines which droop to the water's edge, threaten on either hand. Madame Tetteron's Tooth, a jagged rock, rises close to the channel. Multitudes of birds swarm out from the little island to the right and surround

the ship with raucous cries. A pelican, resting on the water, takes alarm, awkwardly rises a stone's-throw distant, and flaps heavily away.

A few moments and we are through the strait and into the placid calm of the protected bay. The ocean swells sink into ripples; the tension of the crew standing at their stations slackens into the relief of a voyage virtually finished. Captain Drijver leaves the bridge.

"We are at anchor before Port of Spain in an hour," he calls to Miss Graham, a Trinidadian returning from a visit to Canada. An irrepressible young American, who is slated for a six months' stay in a coast town of Venezuela as manager of a magnesite quarry, comes up, camera in hand.

"The Royal Dutch Line is all right, Captain," he exclaims, "but I am not going past Hatteras by sea again. I'm going back by land."

THE DRAGON'S MOUTH AND MADAME TETTERON'S TOOTH

Trinidad

The seriously-minded English Colonial, returning from two months "at home" to his general merchandise establishment, the "Caledonian Stores" of Port of Spain, solemnly undertakes to instruct him as to the impracticability of going overland from Venezuela to New York.

"You won't want to leave the tropics at all," volunteers Grath, late serjeant of the Philippine Constabulary, bound now for the Barber Asphalt Company works at Pitch Lake. "I spent just one winter in the North, and then I applied everywhere for a position that would take me back to where it was warm."

Miss Graham agrees with the ex-serjeant, but says that it is good to get North sometimes, "to thicken one's blood a bit." The six tank-builders imported from Oklahoma look apathetically at the shore where they are to spend the next year constructing steel storage-reservoirs for an Oil Fields Corporation.

Glittering green areas of coco-nut palms nestling at the foot of the hill-sides stand out among the variegated tones of the trees on the slopes of the peninsula which the vessel skirts; a bright red-and-white roof peeps out from the midst of a banana plantation; flocks of gulls, fishers, and pelicans pass; a dory driven forward by a swarthy crew creeps along the coast; myriads of milky jellyfish float in the still water, whose glassy surface is broken from time to time by the rush of a shoal of little fish pursued by sharks, whose triangular fins sail menacingly past.

The golf course is still laid out on the deck, where, during the six days from New York, Captain Drijver has held the field against all comers, victorious because of his matchless science in sending the discs into the "Marrowijne's" scuppers. But now it is deserted. For the last meal before landing the gong makes its announcement, and we descend.

Trinidad

The irrepressible American opens rather early in the day his final bottle of the ship's champagne, as a finishing luxury before his six months' exile. Grath tells a last story about a rheumatic cripple in the Philippines, cured by the appearance of a Moro with a three-foot creese, endeavouring to obtain a pass into Paradise by the slaughter of so convenient an infidel. Brown, boss of the tank-building gang, mourns silently the three men who deserted on the last jovial night in New York after he had paid their passage from Oklahoma. The bearded Dutch mate, sitting stiffly at table in his white tropical uniform, pays his parting addresses to Miss Graham.

It is a hurried meal, for we are skirting the hills of Trinidad and nearing port. Tiny islands appear, with houses perched on them as on the Thousand Isles of the St. Lawrence. A sloop is overtaken, all sail set, moving with the

breath of wind that is stirring. The masts and stacks of larger ships are seen in the distance, and a steeple rises on the shore. The roadstead comes into view, and finally, with white houses amid green verdure and grey docks and the crowded sailing-ships in front, there is unveiled the city of Port of Spain.

The Captain looks intently through his binoculars and turns around to us.

"The bubonic plague is in Trinidad," he says.

"Holy smoke!" ejaculates one of the tank crew.

Brown and the drillers look disconsolately at the shore. There is a moment's silence.

"Oh, there's nothing alarming in the plague," drawls Miss Graham phlegmatically. "We are always having cases here —only one or two among the natives, however."

"Yes," says the English resident, "but

it means quarantine. Jamaica wants to hurt our trade and puts up quarantine, and then the States quarantine Panama and you have to play hide and seek from port to port until you can find one where they will let you in and from which you can start for your destination. I knew some Venezuelans who had to take a ship to Grenada, from Grenada to Jamaica, and from Jamaica back to Venezuela to go the hundred miles from Puerto Cabello to Caracas."

"The worst that can happen is that they do not allow you to return to the States," says Captain Drijver consolingly.

A swarm of row-boats nears the "Marrowijne." Two heavy lighters bear down on her quarter, great brown lateen sails spread: negroes in dilapidated shirts and abbreviated trousers help the sails with long sweeps.

A launch comes puffing out with sundry officials clad in white, escorted by two

well-set-up negroes in dark blue uniforms and black straw hats bearing on the bands "Trinidad Constabulary." The mail-bags are taken up and piled on deck, together with the passengers' trunks and bundles.

A long delay now occurs. We sit idly about with belongings heaped around us and wait and look at the docks and the shipping and the water. At last the word is given. Passengers, bags, and baggage go down the steps alongside into the launch, and we steam ashore.

The landing is crowded with people. A horde of avid porters jump on board as we touch and seize all the luggage they can find. Three girls are on the dock to greet Miss Graham, a little dark Venezuelan to meet the American, an agent of the Oil Fields Company to guide Brown and the tank-builders to the train for New Brighton. We all jostle into the custom-house and assemble our baggage on the long tables.

Trinidad

Sleepily a half-breed official pokes around in the bags. If one admits having fire-arms they go into bond until a licence is secured. All is over in five minutes, and you are free of Trinidad.

The gateway from the custom-house is blocked by a disorderly mass of riotously vociferating negro hackmen, strangely clad in raiments ranging from antique liveries to brown overalls, with battered top-hats or straw sombreros perched indifferently on their heads. From them you are rescued by a neatly-uniformed half-breed chauffeur. Your luggage is crowded onto his machine, which gradually works clear of the dock and into Marine Square, simmering beneath the morning sun.

A hundred-foot strip of lawn with trees planted haphazard along it runs between the roadways on either side. We pass the colonnaded stores of the Trinidad merchants, the shipping companies' offices,

the quaintly called Ice House Hotel, the Union Club with its row of chairs on the terrace, and farther up the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Into Frederick Street the automobile turns. The whole narrow roadway is glutted with a motley swarm of many-toned humanity. Negroes in every sort of garb, from trim khaki to ragged overalls, clean-looking English business-men in white linen and pith helmets, dark Venezuelans with wide sombreros, sallow octoroons, and here and there an East Indian coolie in flowing white, turbaned, barelegged. Clerks crowd the shop entrances. Goods heap the side-walks as at a Paris bazaar. A few blocks farther the crowd has thinned, and the shops are smaller and less pretentious. The chauffeur lets out an unearthly shriek from the horn —two natives jump aside, and away we go.

Trinidad is new to automobiles, and there is no speed limit. A naïvely un-

feeling editorial in the "Port of Spain Gazette" once bemoaned the coolies' habit of walking in the middle of the road because it is so unpleasant for automobiling tourists to be obliged to run over people. The streak across Port of Spain which the automobile now makes is like the nightmare of a speed maniac.

Stone houses with jealous white walls, over which peer great masses of red and purple flowers, airy wooden cottages embedded coquettishly in verdure, corner shops, native carts, messenger boys on bicycles, groups of negro women walking three abreast, graceful coolie girls—all dart by as if jerked from in front of your eyes. A cricket match is passed before you can see whether the ball is hit or missed. The level savanna at the base of the hills, with its race-course and football fields, is skirted, and the motor shoots through the palm-bordered entrance to the Queen's Park Hotel.

Here is rest. It is the antithesis to the bustle of the port and the delirium of the drive. An old darky in faded livery, "Methuselah," totters out and looks at you. Coolly-clad figures in rocking-chairs on the porch meditatively absorb their drinks without even doing that. After a time, a clerk appears and you sign the register. A while later a black boy comes and lifts your luggage from the motor. After a little longer interval the manager has reached the point of taking you for a long, slow, rambling walk which leads at length to the room that is reserved.

It is a huge chamber half as large as a tennis-court. A wicker couch, two big cane arm-chairs, two tables, a gigantic bed and a chest of drawers constitute the furniture. The doors, the window-shades, and the walls for two feet down from the ceiling are lattice-work, open to all the winds that blow. A door in front opens

into the garden facing the Savanna. In the courtyard behind, tame white egrets step daintily among the palms and a parrot and toucan screech to each other from adjoining cages. On one side is a row of sheds containing huge bath-tubs.

The hotel regime is printed on a notice-board. Coffee is at seven, breakfast at eleven, tea at four, and dinner at seven. In effect, you are put on a two-meal basis, staving off mid-afternoon pangs with tea and toast. As breakfast is over at twelve, which hour is already rapidly nearing, it seems desirable to indulge now, calling the meal lunch, to justify eating at this time. So you go out on the veranda, which serves as a dining-room.

Black waiters dressed in white serve you, with quarter-hour waits between courses, and there are brought the multitudinous dishes of a meal, which begins with hominy and progresses through the stock British stand-bys of bacon and

eggs and liver and bacon. Indigenous additions follow: fried plantains and a strangely named fish whose consumption, according to the legend, will bring you back to Trinidad without fail. When fruits are reached you explore a new kingdom,—mangoes with their stringy seed; little bananas three inches long, with a flavour never found in varieties shipped North; juicy star-apples; sour-saps with prickly green exterior and creamy paste inside; sapadillas, in appearance brown and like a spherical potato, but inside granular with sugary sweetness. It is a wonderful collection. Why are they not exported in cold storage? *¿Quién sabe?*

It is a long function, this breakfast. One feels as if he had accomplished an important act when he joins the rest on the rocking-chairs of the portico. None but the heaviest of black Havana cigars seem appropriate, or at least none are

procurable. You idly watch a company of negroes with a couple of energetic Englishmen at cricket practice on the Savanna. Farther off some cattle feed, strange humped beasts, zebu imported from India with the indentured coolies. Horses are being exercised for the forthcoming races on the track beyond the zebu.

Magnificent trees are scattered here and there,—gigantic spreading samans, banyans with their myriad roots, cannon-ball trees bearing spherical black pods. In front of the houses that face the park stand, like sentinels, rows of towering royal palms. Splashes of vivid colour show here and there amidst the green: the poinsettia's flaming scarlet, the begonia's purple, the white of the matapile flowers.

As the heat grows, the cricketers cease their laborious play. The portico chairs are largely deserted. It is hot, let no one doubt this. It is time for the siesta and

the bath which prepares you for a fresh start in the late afternoon.

At four o'clock, refreshed, rested, and clean, the world reappears. There is a stir around the veranda. Englishmen on horseback ride up. Ladies in white come out and make tea for linen-clad visitors. Carriages, at first a few but soon a stream, pass by.

A brougham with an ancient negro on the box stops before the hotel door. Methuselah potters over to give you a note. It is an invitation to drive from Mrs. Farrell, wife of the manager of one of the oil companies. You climb into the carriage and set out for your hostess's residence. Big rambling houses embowered in gardens line the short way. A row of towering palms marks the Farrell land. In their yard a tame deer looks questioningly at you. The whole front of the house is a big broad veranda, with tall white pillars supporting the roof.

"We all drive in the cool of the afternoon," says Mrs. Farrell, who is awaiting you. "It is the most important function in the day."

We enter the carriage, drive out of the grounds and swing into the procession that flows past the gateway.

"Most of the ladies here do not get dressed until afternoon," she observes presently. "Mother Hubbards and carpet slippers, you know. Now I will point you out the lions."

A dark middle-aged man with a very pretty girl beside him passes and bows ceremoniously. "That is Mr. Siegert and his daughter; his place is beside the Queen's Park," says Mrs. Farrell. "He was a Venezuelan, but the revolutions drove him out. He came here with his family and makes the Angostura bitters which the monks used to brew."

A brougham with a fine pair of bays goes by. "The Sandersons," says your

hostess. "He is an American. His father got the flour monopoly of Venezuela and the family has still an interest in it. He married a Venezuelan and lives here most of the time. They have that big white house by the College."

A solitary bearded man driving a dog-cart passes. "That is Graham, the richest man in Trinidad. They say he is the shrewdest too. He has a grant of Crown land planted with coco-nuts and cocoa. He has plantations all over the island."

On the piazza of a big house with palms in front she points out Benoit Tomasi. "He is a Corsican, who came to Venezuela without a penny. He traded and built up a big business along the Orinoco. His nephew runs it now and he lives here. He owns the Callao Mine, but there is a lawsuit on and he can get nothing from it.

"You have a letter for Mr. Robertson, have you not? That is his automobile just turning in."

You mention that you have received an invitation to dine with him to-night.

"He is very interesting. He is as Scotch as if he had only been out of the old country a fortnight, but his family has been here for two generations. His father came from Scotland fifty years ago and started a mercantile house in Demerara. The son conducts the Trinidad branch of the firm; but he keeps up his family connexion with Scotland and goes back every year. His wife is there now."

A bearded man of distinguished appearance salutes us from the promenade.

"Baron Spejo, a Spaniard," says Mrs. Farrell; "and yonder," nodding forward to a typically British figure on horseback, "is Major Bridges, of the Constabulary. He has seen service in Egypt and South Africa—was sent here after the Boer War. There beyond are Señor and Señora Gracia. They are nice people, but it

is whispered that they are touched—negro blood, you know. It may not be so. It is fashionable for gossip here to blacken skins as well as reputations."

We leave the Savanna drive and its promenaders and turn to the left into the Maraval road, past a straggling negro settlement and into a wooded valley under the hills. The road runs between huge clumps of bamboos, in many places shading the way like a tunnel. Humming-birds flit here and there, the sacred "Iere" of the now extinct Carib Indians who welcomed the old Conquistadores.

A delightful coolness fills the air, scented with the odour of a multitude of flowers. The contrast to the blaze of midday is luxuriously appreciated.

We turn as dusk comes on. Slowly the sedate horses take us back to town. The peace of nature casts its spell over the dying day. As darkness gathers quickly, bats begin to dart and

VILLA NEAR PORT-OF-SPAIN

circle alongside. The chirp of insects, the cry of night-birds, the mournful "O-poor-me-one," which the negroes say is the call of the sloth, sound from the thickets. Light after light springs out from cottages along the road and from the town ahead. It is dark when the horses hoofs rattle on the gravel of the Farrell driveway.

It takes some speedy dressing to make Mr. Robertson's dinner on schedule time. Even here in the tropics that stiff-bosomed rampart of British respectability, the dress-suit, is requisite. A dinner coat is permissible, but that is the ultimate concession. Mr. Robertson sends his machine to take you to his house, which is one of those facing the Savanna.

As you enter the host is talking with another guest, Mr. George Stevenson, Mining Engineer, Member of the British Institute, fresh from the Galician oil-fields, called here to examine some

Trinidad oil prospect. Soon after appear George Frothingham, a cocoa-planter with large estates in the middle of the island, a nephew of the host, fresh from the old country and being broken in at Robertson's stores, and Major Albert Bridges, of the Constabulary.

We are introduced to the renowned "green swizzle"—a liquid whose translucent tinge fills the bottom of the glass, the green shading gradually into the dark red of bitters near the surface. Gin, lime, and soda have entered into its making, and the star-shaped swizzle-stick has been twirled within it. Its taste is unique; its action *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

Green swizzles have a marked effect on people's conversational ability. Stevenson recounts stories of his start in the Indian Civil Service under Sir William Willcox, the famous engineer, whose genius threw the Assuan Dam across the full current of the Nile and redeemed

a kingdom of waste land for Egyptian cultivation. "The most religious man I ever knew," adds the engineer; "he did not even swear when the berm of one of our irrigation canals gave way."

"He never had to unravel a lawsuit between two time-expired East Indians," says Major Bridges.

"He never tried to make cocoa-planting pay with negro labour," grumbles Frothingham. "Those negroes are not worth a penny. If it weren't for the coolies there would not be a white planter in Trinidad. It is bad enough as it is."

"Cocoa-men are always grumbling," says the host. "How would you like to have had sugar and to have seen your values wiped out by foreign beet-root subsidies? Why, you cocoa people and the coco-nut growers are all capitalists!"

Frothingham does not have much to say, for in fact he has not suffered in the sale of cocoa. "We have done well

as a naval station. It is generally believed here that the British Admiralty is planning to beat them out by establishing a huge naval base at Port of Spain. Fortifying the islands at the Dragon's Mouth and Cedros Point overlooking the Serpent's Mouth will enable us to command both entrances to the Gulf of Paria. Then we will control the trade route from Europe to Panama, and to the east coast of South America."

"They say the Standard Oil Company is trying to get control of the field already," comments Frothingham.

"Well, oil is here all right," asserts the host. "The Pitch Lake people have shipped one tank-steamer full and are building sixteen big thirty-five-thousand-barrel tanks. And they don't usually spend any money foolishly—except what they give for revolutions in Venezuela."

"We aren't like Venezuela," says the Major virtuously.

"There is one good thing about

you and speaking in his broadest Scotch, "we'll forgie them in Lunnon if they'll send no more like yon wastrel."

Everybody laughs at the Major, and then we pour him a drink of Scotch to cheer him up.

The talk drifts to the indentured coolies. The engineer has studied their social system while in India. "All here are of the lower castes—sudras," he says, "and each goes down one degree by leaving India. It will take many payments to the priests when they return to procure redemption."

"Many of them don't return at all," comments Robertson. "I have a lawsuit with a time-expired coolie freeholder about a road. They are the worst people for going to law you ever saw."

"I should think they were," adds Frothingham, "except when their wives are too attractive to their friends. Then they slice the woman up with a machete

and send the man a piece of her as a gift. But everything else they go to law about. There was a case up before the San Fernando Police Court last week. A free labourer named Bo Jawan, belonging to our Harmony Hall estate, came to the Government Savings Bank with his wife Jugdeah, making the air blue with Hindu expletives. The woman had deposited some money in her own name and the husband wanted to draw it. 'If you don't give me the money I will bring Mahabit Maharaj (the Governor) and the police,' he shouted. Jugdeah tried to run away, but the coolie made a tackle and got her by the leg. De la Rosa, the cashier, is a hot-tempered chap and he threw the man downstairs. The coolie summoned him for assault, and the wife proceeded to perjure herself by saying that she and her husband had tiptoed in, hand-in-hand, and had asked for her money

together in a dulcet voice. De la Rosa got off, but it cost him a pound fine. The judge is a negro, and he gives it to the whites a little extra when a case comes up to him."

We end dinner with coffee and cashew nuts, and go out to watch the engineer beat the cocoa-planter at billiards on a huge English table in the palm room. At midnight the party breaks up, and as the automobile whirls back to the hotel, among the wonderfully bright constellations can be seen the Southern Cross, upright high above the horizon.

A fortnight's stay in Port of Spain is well worth the time. You are put up at the Union Club in Marine Square, where the business men gather for breakfast, and at the Queen's Park Club, which declares itself to be "sporting and social." You explore the recesses of the negro quarter. You visit the nurseries

where seeds and shoots from all over the world are experimented with, to test their adaptability to Trinidad, and where indigenous coffee plants, balatá gum, cocoa, bananas, oranges, everything that may be useful to the Colony, is being grafted and developed. You can order khaki or white linen suits made at an English tailor's for some such ridiculous price as five dollars, and buy American watches and sewing-machines at about a quarter less than in the States.

Your letters open the doors to a quaint world of English officials sent out from the old country to this London-governed Crown Colony. You meet Venezuelan exiles, some long-established, like the Siegerts, some only recently fled from across the Gulf, with their property confiscated and bitterness in their hearts. You find American managers of the asphalt and petroleum companies; retired Corsican traders grown rich on

QUEEN'S PARK

INDIGENOUS CRICKET

the balatá export; English and Scotch merchants and old French families dating from the time of the negro insurrection in Haiti. A veritable kaleidoscope of tints and shades are the assemblages at the Government Palace, where the wives of negro magistrates rub elbows with Colonial planters and English officials.

To see the rest of the island, a motor trip is the best method. Trinidad is only 50 miles square, and is crossed by splendid roads. The manager of one of the oil companies, Mr. David Jefferson, an American from Alabama, puts his car at our disposal. A day is selected, and as an early start is desirable, so as to ride as much as possible in the cool of the day, seven o'clock in the morning is set for the time of departure. The machine appears promptly with a smart-looking negro chauffeur at the wheel. Fixed on the front of the radiator is a bedraggled Teddy Bear.

"A queer conceit," you remark.

"That isn't a fancy," is the answer; "wait until we hit the native settlement." A few moments later we are in the region of low mud huts and streets so crowded that the horn must be blown continuously. From every side run up piccaninnies, some clad in a shirt, some in a wisp of rag, some in a smile. With one accord they shriek for joy, dance up and down, point to each other, and a good half of their parents do the same. "Monkee! monkee!" they cry.

"You see!" says Mr. Jefferson; "they don't pay any attention to the automobile, they are so interested in the Teddy Bear. I can run over a dozen assorted chickens, dogs, pigs, and ducks, and when I come back, instead of heaving rocks at me, they shout at the bear."

We shoot on with the echo ringing in our ears, "Monkee! monkee!"

An East Indian settlement appears

now, and the coolie children do exactly as the negro piccaninnies did, shouting while their elders stare fixedly at the Teddy.

We pass a tall figure of a man with ample robes and a caste mark on his forehead who does not deign to notice us—a Hindu priest. Coolie women, their faces half covered with silken shawls and their arms laden with silver bangles, hammered out from the English shillings which represent the savings of the family, glide gracefully by. What a contrast are their lithe slender figures, in gracefully draped robes, to those of the negro women, in cheap ready-made skirts and bodices, who, shapelessly bundled together, waddle clumsily along! Some of the coolie girls are really beautiful, though they invariably spoil the effect by a nose-ring.

A cart drawn by a span of zebu with half a dozen bare-legged coolies

sitting on hard planks passes. Farther along, beside a small stream rest a yoke of water buffalo. Little nondescript dogs, looking like degenerate fox-terriers, run out and snap at the whirring wheels. Four coolies appear walking abreast and carrying a big magenta flag. They scatter to left and right as we pass. Their usually snowy white shirts are stained and streaked with purple, as if a tub of dye had fallen on them.

"They throw those colours on each other at the feasts," explains Mr. Jefferson above the whir of the wheels.

The suburbs of Port of Spain extend for six miles. Almost all the way along the road there are little adobe houses, sometimes those of negroes, sometimes those of coolies, for though these two races disdain each other they live side by side.

Each has a comfortable feeling of superiority, the negro because he is free

A STREET IN SAN FERNANDO

to loaf while the coolie is indentured for five years, the coolie because of his traditions of ancient civilization and the pride of caste, to which every Indian down to the lowest clings, even here on the other side of the world.

A sugar-cane plantation is reached, extending for miles in every direction. A locomotive on a narrow-gauge track puffs near by, hidden amid the high cane. Farther on coolies with machetes in hand are cutting stalks, which others load into cars, piling them to a great height. Miles of cane-brake flank the beautifully smooth and well-kept roads.

The ground becomes more hilly. Cocoa plantations begin, straight files of small cocoa-trees shaded by immortelles, with dark alleys between the rows. The ripening pods, green, yellow, red, and purple, sprout in queer fashion directly from the trunk or from thick branches.

After a two-hour run San Fernando

is reached, with its statue of the crucified Christ overlooking the market-place of the coolies. A half-dozen miles beyond this is the entrance to the Government's Forest Reserve. The trail into the forest is impassable, unfortunately, for the automobile. We start in on foot through a small cocoa plantation owned by a coolie who has served his time and purchased Crown land.

Beyond it the forest begins. Nothing can describe the feeling of one's own insignificance which the monster trunks that flank the narrow trail inspire. One is an ant beneath these giants. The weirdly colossal forests which Gustave Doré drew to illustrate Chateaubriand's "Atala," with pygmy figures wandering beneath the overwhelming majesty of the virgin woods, are here a reality. Mora trees, 80 feet to 120 feet high, tower up on either hand. Cedars rise 60 feet to 80 feet tall. Balatá rubber trees shoot

up 100 feet, with the scars of the rubber tappings on them. Here and there are specimens whose boles grow in the shape of narrow buttresses and cover at the bottom an area 40 feet square. From the tall hardwoods hang tenuous vines, dropping straight as a plummet. We toil through the heavy clay, around trunks and over logs, drenched with perspiration, oppressed by the dank heat.

"Here are hardwoods that nobody ever heard of up North, which ought to be marketed," Jefferson remarks.

"Disgracefully commercial," you tell him, and climb back into the automobile.

Frequent villages of coolies and negroes lie along the way, and long stretches of cocoa plantation. Now and then we pass a neat stucco constabulary station. Amid the multitudes of natives an occasional white overseer is seen driving by in his buggy. As we get towards the Atlantic coast the road narrows and the jungle

takes the place of cultivated lands. Dense thickets 30 feet high, with occasional big trees lifting their heads above the other vegetation, close in on either hand. The ground is more and more hilly. At length, after a stretch of cocoanut palms, there appear the roofs of a straggly settlement of poor-looking houses, the village of Mayaro, in the south-east corner of the island.

Twelve miles of drive along the beach will take us to the Guayaguayare oilfields, where the production of petroleum has been recently started. We must leave the car, which cannot negotiate the heavy sands, but a good mule and buggy are loaned us for the trip. While waiting for low tide, we lunch upon tinned goods and biscuit bought from a Chinaman who keeps a general store. All around cocoanut trees are growing, the nuts hanging a few feet overhead. We ask for one to try, but not a man will budge. "They

belong to George Grant," is the explanation. It is a commentary on the rigidity and the enforcement of the law here.

At length, when close to ebb-tide, we start along a beach. Mile after mile of unfenced coco-nut plantations, the palms rooted in the barren sand, border the sea-shore. A few houses of negroes and one occupied by a white superintendent look out towards the Atlantic. Beautiful pink and purple Portuguese men-of-war lie on the beach. The dry ones burst with a loud pop when a wheel crushes over them. A negro boy walks along in the shoal water, throwing a net from time to time and bringing back the small bulge-eyed fishes which swim along the margin of the land to avoid the bigger fish in the deeper water. A solitary pelican skims the sea, making occasional dives into the breakers.

Here along the shore, with the trade wind blowing in, it is cool even in mid-

afternoon. But where the road cuts through the forest the heat is oppressive. We ford two shallow river-mouths with tangles of mangrove in the area where fresh water meets salt. The coco-nut groves give place to forested hills and the distorted and broken strata of clay and sand show up on the cliffs along the sea.

At length appears a row of houses set up on stilts 15 feet in the air, the quarters of the white workmen of the oil company. The local manager comes down to meet us, and we climb the stairs and enter the mosquito-proof portico, where pipes, magazines, and great easy-chairs show that when off duty certain elemental comforts are not lacking.

Dinner is due as we arrive, and after a wash we sit down to the manager's mess. After dinner some bottled specimens of the deadly coral snake found on the works are proudly exhibited. We dip into some ancient "Strand Magazines"

A MUD VOLCANO IN THE OIL REGION

on the veranda and smoke our pipes and talk looking out upon the quiet ocean.

In the morning we take a handcar propelled by four negroes and go up the narrow-gauge track to the wells. Row after row of spare bits and casing-elevators lie neatly ranged in the store-room. Farther on are the derricks with their boilers 100 feet distant, so that in case of a gusher the oil will not take fire. A 60-foot stream of oil shot up from one of the wells near by recently, and most of the oil was lost at sea before the flow could be stopped.

Within the derrick-shed an engine turns a 9-foot bull-wheel, driving up and down a walking beam like that on a Mississippi steamer. The drill-hole, lined with pipe 8 inches in diameter, goes down 1,800 feet through the layers (clay and sandstone) of the oil-bearing anticline. At the bottom of the well, attached to the walking beam by a 2-inch hemp cable

works the drilling bit, shaped like a fish's tail. Above it is the jar or link which brings the bit up with a jerk when the beam is being raised. This "string of tools" churns down through rock and clay into the oil sands. Some hundreds of feet away a well fully dug is being pumped for oil. Still farther off another is having the water and the sand, pulverized by the bit, baled out so that drilling can recommence.

We take a trip on foot to a place close at hand where natural gas rises from the ground and can be lit by a match. Farther on is a little brook running a driblet of black oil instead of water from some spring in the hill-side. In places black ledges of pitch, soft in the hot sun, give under the feet. A small mud volcano is near by.

The forest with its great trees, screeching parakeets and buzzing insects, is all about.

The return trip along the sands brings

THE ASPHALT LAKE

us back to Mayaro at about noon, after long stretches of wading, for the tide nearly catches us under the cliffs. A long run in the automobile brings us to the celebrated Asphalt Lake. The straggling village at its edge is an extraordinary spectacle. Not a house but is twisted out of plumb. The land is the source of never-ending litigation, because the slowly shifting currents of the pitch bottom in a few years move yards and gardens on to other men's property, distort boundaries into every possible shape, carry landmarks a hundred yards away. Some natives are doing a little desultory digging here before the territory of the Asphalt Company begins. A green bamboo across the road marks its boundary.

There shiftlessness ends and system begins. Well-built mosquito-proof barracks for the workmen, with shower-baths and clothes-racks, grace the bare hill. A long pier extends far out to sea and

the houses of the officers are built over piles alongside, swept by every breeze. On a cable-way to the ship waiting off the pier-end goes a slow line of big steel buckets, and negroes stand sending the asphalt contents down a chute into the hold.

The manager of the lake, Mr. Procter, clad in khaki and riding gaiters, welcomes us with strange drinks and Cuban cigars on his swaying house above the waters of the Gulf of Paria. We lunch with him and his engineers. After a chat we follow back the half-mile-long cable-way to the lake.

The abomination of desolation is this lake. In spots a palm killed by the asphalt droops disconsolately. A few tufts of grass have secured a footing in places. But for the rest it is a solid mass of black, dull, evil-smelling pitch, with pools of water here and there in which swim little parboiled fishes. Against any of the hot spots in the world, bar none, this can be backed. The tropic sun beats

down; the black asphalt reflects it back like the entrance of a furnace. One's feet are unbearably hot through the heavy leather and one sinks if he stands still for a moment. A hundred and fifty degrees have been recorded on the lake.

A wicked-looking black snake six feet long glides into the bushes near the margin of the lake. It has been sunning itself on the asphalt. No wonder the serpents are supposed to be creatures of the devil. As for ourself, fifteen minutes' stay takes away every bit of vitality we can summon. Not enough interest is left in life to inquire what the negroes hewing with mattocks at the asphalt receive in wages. They earn the pay, whatever it is. There is no mechanical way yet discovered by which the stuff can be dug. Hour after hour these negroes hack out, with a few blows of the mattock, the brittle pitch, which flakes away in pieces a foot square. They lift the burden to their heads and

dump it into the steel buckets, which start their slow way to the ship. The holes fill up in a few days with new pitch.

"The lake is ninety to one hundred acres in extent now," says Mr. Procter, "but it is gradually shrinking with the removal of such large quantities. A good percentage of the asphalt pavement in the world comes from this one lake and its geological complement in Venezuela. We leased it under a forty-seven year contract with the Trinidad Government, to which nearly $250,000 a year has been paid in royalties. Such mining is the nearest thing there is to digging money out of the ground."

"Yes, but your Asphalt Trust is welcome to it," says Mr. Jefferson. "If I had a thousand a day to dig pitch I would not take it."

We drink all the iced tea in the Thermos bottle, when we get back to the machine, and turn it loose for Port of Spain.

III

THE SERPENT'S MOUTH

YOUR proposed trip across the Gulf, up the Orinoco and into the interior of Venezuela along the path of the Seekers for El Dorado evokes a most alarming chaos of varying advice.

Major Bridges, of the Constabulary, who has never been out of Trinidad and has a truly Saxon prejudice against everything Latin and lawless, roundly declares that Venezuela is a "no man's land" where murder is commoner than soap and water. "I have never been in the vile country, but I heard that for shooting a man over there the judge fines the guilty party only forty dollars."

Baron Caratoni, who has a rubber con-

cession in Venezuela which he wants to sell, protests volubly. "No, no, they don't shoot strangers—they only shoot each other. It is perfectly safe for a stranger."

Jefferson, of the oil fields, tells that the Sunday previous seven men employed at the Pitch Lake had gone over to Venezuela in a sail-boat. They had been all thrown into prison as revolutionaries and had not yet been released. "They will keep you in jail for months and you will get the yellow fever," he warns.

Carrera, exiled in the Castro regime, now the possessor of a timber concession upon the Caroni granted by the new Government, relates how in the old days he was incarcerated for carrying an entirely innocent letter which a friend had given him to post. He was arrested on the pretence that carrying letters was a Government function and letters were "contraband."

"They used to do that in the old times,

but not now under President Gomez. No one has any trouble now," the exile avers.

"Beastly country, just the same," insists Robertson, the merchant. "They have an extra customs tax of 30 per cent. on all goods which come from Trinidad. Castro put it on and Gomez does not take it off."

"You can never get your guns in, anyway," cautions the cocoa-grower. "The Minister of the Interior is the only man who has the right to issue permits for firearms, and he always refuses to do so. They are so afraid of revolutions."

Evidently Venezuela is an interesting country. Also, all this advice is worth considering. You sit back and ponder as the critics one and all leave the hotel. Mr. Jefferson turns as he goes: "Over there is a man who can tell you enough about the Orinoco. He is just back from Ciudad Bolivar."

Talking with a couple of dusky-hued

Spanish belles on the portico of the Queen's Park Hotel sits a linen-clad figure topped by a sweeping white sombrero.

"Introduce me," you suggest. For some reason Jefferson hesitates. He is silent a long, dubious minute. Then he laughs lightly and shrugs his shoulders. "If you insist," he says, and walks across.

"Mr. Fitzgerald!" The latter turns around carelessly.

"Hullo, Jeff! How's the boy?" he snaps with a regular Yankee twang. The introduction follows. A few general remarks are interchanged, then we settle to our theme. His roving grey eyes meet yours.

"Venezuela! sure I can tell you about Venezuela!" He signals a waiter with his rattan cane and gives a repeat order.

After the chaos of contrary advice from insular Englishmen and Venezuelan promoters anxious to sell rubber plantations, it is like the turning on of a searchlight to meet this type of fellow-countryman.

You fire in some specific and direct questions.

"Do people shoot each other habitually over there?"

"Only when they get excited."

This seems perfectly satisfactory.

"How about the men that went across from New Brighton and got caught by the gunboat?"

"Why, sure, they got pinched. They didn't take out any papers or pass the custom-house. You'll be jugged anywhere if you enter that way. Get the permit and go in through the custom-house—then it is like sliding off a log."

"Well, how about confiscating your rifles, and 30 per cent. taxes and such things?"

"Why, if you are on the level there is nothing to it. But every revolution Venezuela ever had started in Trinidad, and half the merchants here have divvied up with the smugglers. That old fox

Castro figured out that an extra 30 per cent. duty would square things, and his dope was about right. Gomez, the new President, seems to think so, anyway."

"Then there is no trouble about going up the Orinoco and into the interior?"

"Never a bit," says Fitzgerald. "The Venezuelans are the real goods—dead game sports and no limit."

"That settles it," you remark. "I am going to Ciudad Bolivar to-morrow on the 'Delta.'"

Fitzgerald thinks a moment and sizes you up with a sidelong glance. "Say, I'm off for there myself to-morrow on my launch; come along with me."

You sweep a scrutinizing glance over him in turn; thinking a moment, too, you recall Jefferson's shrug wherein he shook off all responsibility. Then you accept.

"Done," and on it you shake.

You agree to dine together at the hotel

that evening and talk over ways and means. Meanwhile you start out alone to assemble your personal outfit. The Spanish Baron is the first man you meet. "All is decided," you say gleefully.

"Ah, so monsieur is going on the 'Delta'?"

"But no, upon the launch of Monsieur Fitzgerald!"

The Baron's face goes pale. "That launch! Why, it is only of two tons; you do not know what it is to cross the Straits, the Serpent's Mouth—it is to die."

The Venezuelan exile, Carrera, comes up the hotel steps.

"He is going up the Orinoco on Fitzgerald's little launch," appeals the Baron. "C'est se suicider—let him ask Vicetella, of the Navigation Company."

Carrera tactfully shrugs his shoulders and says nothing. But a moment later he draws you to one side.

"Fitzgerald you don't know, but he is mixed up in all sorts of things. A filibuster, partner of Jack Boynton. It was he ran in the guns for Matas's revolution, packed in barrels of lard."

On the streets you meet Robertson, the British merchant. "Seriously, it is very, very dangerous passing the Serpent's Mouth, and Fitzgerald is absolutely reckless. He's the only man in all Trinidad mad enough to go on a trip like that."

Scott, the young American field superintendent of the oilfields company, three years out of Princeton, who has been listening to the divers woes and alarms, grins at the last. "I wish I were going too."

We meet Fitzgerald at dinner and start a list of supplies. It begins with flour and goes on down through such stock provisions as condensed milk, baked beans, and canned stuff, *ad lib.* The tropic specialities Fitzgerald adds: a big

mosquito bar for the whole back of the boat, a basket of limes, cashew nuts, and a box of oranges. Now come a series which elicit remarks.

"Half a dozen hams."

"Isn't that rather a mouthful for a fortnight's trip?" you ask.

"Oh, they are a present for El Presidente, the Governor of the State of Bolivar."

"Put down one case of champagne."

"Are you going to swim up an Orinoco of fizz, or do you nourish the crew on champagne?" asks Scott.

"Oh no. It goes as presents to the officials of the Aduana—the Custom House, you know. Put down a ten-pound box of chocolates—for the wives of the officials of the Aduana. Add a case of beer."

"Who is this for—us?" you inquire.

"No, for the Jefes Civiles in the little towns—the mayors, you know. Put

down five boxes of Havana cigars for the Commandantes."

"You have forgotten the wives of the Commandantes and the Jefes," suggests Scott.

"Good! I am glad you reminded me," says Fitzgerald. "Add candy in jars for them. Now put down two dozen bottles of rum for the minor Custom House people and the boatmen; they can't get along without rum."

This completes the bill, and you put the list away. Fitzgerald gives a most improper wink and sighs luxuriously, for dinner has been completed and we are sitting on the hotel piazza sipping bad coffee and smoking good cigars. Across the road are the telephone lines of the city.

"Did any one ever tell you how the first telephone in Trinidad came to be put up?" asks Fitzgerald meditatively.

You have not heard, and neither has Scott.

"A friend of mine—whom I will not name—managed it," he goes on meditatively. "It was this way: A certain President of one of the South American Republics wanted a police telephone put in at his capitol. The price to be paid was twenty-five thousand dollars. The telephone was to cost about eight thousand, and five people were to split up the balance. We got a first payment of six thousand dollars, all in silver, from the National Treasury, and carried it away in a cart. The President of course got his rake-off in a separate bag, which we sent around first.

"Then the four others sat down, two of them Cabinet Ministers, to slice up their melon. It was a sight to see the Minister of Frumento, who was fat, puffing and perspiring in his shirtsleeves that night making piles of the pesos.

"But that is all the money we—that is, my friend—got. The President was

killed and a new President came in. Not long after, his secretary called on my friend.

"'Look,' he said. 'You have not built the telephones for which you have contracted.' He thought we would give up. But my friend, who had ordered the telephones on credit, figured out that there were pickings on what was left, so he said: 'I will carry out the contract; give me the thirteen thousand dollars remaining.'

"The President's secretary reversed his engines fast, for the Government had no money left. 'No, no! Not that!' He thought awhile, then said: 'As a great favour to you I will get the contract cancelled for nothing.' My friend let it go. There was not enough left in the deal for the new President. So the contract was cancelled and the telephones were brought over and put up here in Trinidad."

Methuselah comes to tell Scott that one of his foremen has called him up

from San Fernando to ask about a drilling bit that is being rethreaded in the Government iron foundry here in Port of Spain. He goes out to reply, and we muse upon the devious ways by which progress comes.

"But that other city never got its police telegraph," Fitzgerald remarks.

We go next day to the Venezuelan Consul, who has been appointed only three days. "They've bounced the Consuls four times in the last year," whispers Fitzgerald. We sign many papers for clearance, and enrol at the Consulate as "captain and first officer respectively of the gasolene launch 'Geraldo,' 2½ tons burden, 24 feet long, crew of two, laden with ship's supplies."

The inwardness of the proceeding is this: A passenger is forbidden by the most stringent possible law from landing in Venezuela at any spot where there is not a "puerto habiltado," or licensed port

with a custom-house. There is not one of these *puertos* between the Orinoco mouth and Ciudad Bolivar, 400 miles up. A passenger for Pedernales, at one of the mouths of the river, is bound to go to Ciudad Bolivar without touching foot to ground, pass the customs, and then come back. To disobey means arrest, jail, fines, and endless trouble to the diplomatic representatives of whichsoever foreign Government has to dig the culprit out. But the officer of a vessel is a bird of another colour. It is not only his pleasure but his duty to land and present his papers and his compliments to the Commandantes and other officials on the way up. And what Commandante is such a particularist in the law of Caracas as to prevent his *amigos*, once landed, from taking a stroll or getting a shot at some alligators? *Voyez vous?*

Many prominent citizens of Venezuela are in the Consulate of Port of Spain.

Three or four have the onerous duty of putting a rubber stamp on the clearance papers, charging some sixteen dollars for their labours. Other patriots are on hand to hold converse with the Consul and smoke cigarettes, while the talk over the sizzling politics of the home country goes back and forth. General Desham, President of the State of Miranda, said to be the best revolver shot in Venezuela, is here. He has several mining concessions in his pocket. Carrera, the rubber man, is here, and the Spanish Baron. The Consulate is like a club-house.

Very courteous they all are, giving us letters to their friends up the river and offering cigarettes *ad libitum*. After an hour we break away and reach the launch.

The wharf-boys have loaded the side of the Custom House dock with a mountain of supplies. It is a miracle how so

much of it gets stored away in the little lockers. The beer and champagne bottles go aft, bereft of their straw covers, which are strewn about the water in front of the Custom House like fallen leaves in autumn. Flour, baking-powder, hams, cans of beans, potted meats, tins of biscuit—these and many more go into the side lockers and drawers. Engine-oil and carbide are tucked away forward. Your modest bag of clothes has to stand on deck behind the engine, the pneumatic mattress and the cartridge box alongside it.

When at last the "Geraldo" is fully laden, with a mountain of cargo on the midships deck because it cannot be stowed, the launch looks seriously overloaded. At that moment a big row-boat, pulled by two negroes, comes alongside. Its entire stern is laden with red wooden boxes containing ten-gallon gasolene tins—sixteen of them. To your horror

you find that Fitzgerald proposes to load these too into the "Geraldo."

There is nothing for it, however. Fuel must be provided and gasolene must be carried. It is passed aboard while you stand aghast. The whole floor of the launch, save a small space beside the engines, is piled as high as the seats with gasolene tins and other goods. The Custom House authorities will not let gasolene be loaded even from the dock. The launch has become a very floating powder-magazine.

With many misgivings, you climb in and perch on the cargo. The two boys that compose the crew let go the moorings and you are off. "Be careful in the Serpent's Mouth," calls Captain Hunt, of the Customs. He shakes his head and goes back into his office on the dock.

We have started. Will we arrive? The two boys casually light up cigarettes as they sit on the forward pile of

gasolene tins, but they throw them overboard in double-quick time on order of the first-officer. The frightfully overloaded boat, flat-bottomed, of 9-inch draught, ploughs through the smooth water in the lee of the land without too much labour. But a half mile out the waves are choppy. The exhaust is partly submerged and the gases puff and snort in protest as the seas block their outlet. An explosive back-fire from time to time barks a sinister warning.

You sit on the cushions and worry for a while. Usually a launch-owner, if he does not mind his own life, is careful of his property. It takes not much seamanship to tell you that to go a mile in a boat so loaded is a nice juicy risk, let alone crossing the Gulf of Paria and passing the reefs of the Serpent's Mouth. There doesn't seem, however, to be any practical way of backing out now.

Fitzgerald appears himself to realize

for the first time what sort of trip it is he has so insouciantly proposed. He is a little nervous and voluble. You learn for the first time with a touch of dismay that this is a new launch and that his former trips up the Orinoco have been made in the 200-foot "Delta."

"Is there a chart?" you ask.

"Yes, yes; I have one," he says.

But a lengthy search fails to produce it. It has gone overboard or been left, or is buried hopelessly in the inextricable mound of luggage.

Now the engine stops, a mile from land, and we toss about in the trough of the waves.

"Joe, come back and turn this fly-wheel," orders Fitzgerald.

Joe, a boy of eighteen, jet black, shambles astern. He has forgotten to throw away a new cigarette he has been smoking on the sly, up forward, hidden by the gasolene tins. In a sulky, half-

hearted way, his second cigarette having gone the way of the first, Joe turns the flywheel. Not an explosion, not a buzz. He turns it again and again and then a few more times. Not a spark.

"Something must be wrong," says Fitzgerald. Nobody contradicts him. "I think it is the spark-plug," he adds. He unscrews the spark-plug. Nothing seems to be wrong there. Joe turns the wheel some more.

"Charlie, you come and turn the wheel!" shouts Fitzgerald. Charlie is about seventeen years old, a mixture of Chinese, negro and white in an unknown ratio. His arms are skinny, and he is far less strong than Joe, who is an able-bodied wharf-rat. Charlie's performance at the wheel is not a success. Joe has to try again.

It takes three hours of this to run down the trouble. We are so loaded in the bow, by the gasolene tins, that the

tank is too low to feed into the engine. We move several tins aft, and just as the sun goes down we get started again.

You stop worrying. Things are too bad to think about. You dig out a tin of sardines and some crackers, and, reclining on the luggage, make a scratch meal. Joe takes the helm and is told to steer for the Southern Cross. Fitzgerald comes astern, joins in the crackers and sardines, and digs out some liquids as well. The sun goes down and the stars come out over the waste of waters. It is a wonderfully beautiful night and the sea is dead calm. The engine throbs away regularly: the troubles of the start seem to have been all smoothed away.

Fitzgerald gets out a mouth-organ from somewhere and wheezes complacently a medley of Venezuelan and American airs—"Gloria al Peublo," "The Swanee River," "La Paloma." He

sings an ancient ditty about a girl who declares to her lover:—

> "My father was a Spanish merchant,
> And the day he sailed away,
> He bade that I should answer 'No, sir,'
> To whatever you should say."

The resourceful lover promptly asks if she would refuse him if he offered his hand. She answers "No, sir," and they all live happy ever afterwards.

Fitzgerald is entertaining. He doubtless feels twinges from a conscience somewhat battered by ten years' knocking around South America, for he exerts himself to make you forget the troubles of starting and the overloaded powder-magazine on which you are reclining and smoking Jamaica "Tropicals." Helped out by a ball-bearing imagination and a few drinks, his memoirs become truly worth their cost. A filibuster, a captain in the United States Army, a

police chief in Peru, a lobbyist in Caracas, a circus proprietor in Ecuador, an official photographer in Panama, exhibitor of the first Edison phonographs along the west coast, which cleaned him up two hundred thousand in a year, a fugitive riding 200 miles and holding up passers-by for fourteen horses in escaping from an outraged Government in Chili, fashionable photographic artist of Ciudad Bolivar and the representative of large capitalists who are on the point of investing in railroads, rubber, timber, *et al.*, in Venezuela —this is our interesting host and superior officer, Fitzgerald, of the launch "Geraldo."

We smoke for a while in silence.

"Did you ever read Lord Byron's poetry?" he asks.

You allow that you have a bowing acquaintance with Byron.

"I think 'Don Juan' is the greatest poem that was ever written." He produces a volume evidently bound by a

Spaniard, since Byron is spelled "Vyron." Most Venezuelans pronounce the words beginning with *v*, such as "vaca," cow, as if the *v* were *b*—"baca." So the Spanish bookbinder assumed that Byron should be Vyron. Long sections of "Don Juan" regale you now, read beneath the swinging lantern. At last Fitzgerald shuts the book regretfully.

"I used to write poems," he says musingly. "Here is one which I wrote in Cuba:—

> "Roll on, roll on, ye wheels of steel,
> You bear us on to woe or weal,
> You bring the bitter and the sweet,
> The flowers and the sugar beet.
> Some are carried for commercial use,
> Yon sugar-mill will use the juice
> To start the smiles of your sweetheart
> And ease the sorrow when you part."

"Can't we make the last a little clearer?" you suggest. "Does the sugar-juice get made into sweets or rum? It really isn't the thing to offer a young lady—rum."

"It is candy, of course," says Fitzgerald indignantly. "Everybody will understand."

The launch plugs away into the night, and at length you fall into an uneasy sleep on the cushions. Shortly before dawn you wake. There is a sound of voices. Joe is explaining something in an insolent drawl and Fitzgerald is swearing in an eminently capable manner. Land is nowhere to be seen. Fitzgerald turns indignantly to you. "This damn fool boy has steered us into the middle of the Gulf of Paria instead of going south along the coast. We ought to be at Cedros Point now, and Heaven knows where we are."

We set a course due west to get into touch with Trinidad again. The ship's officers judge it best to take the wheel personally this time. About nine o'clock land is sighted. On going closer in, the long pier of the Asphalt Company and

their boats at anchor are seen. We are only to San Fernando, half-way down the island, instead of being at the extreme south-west point, which we had expected to strike in the early morning so as to cross the Serpent's Mouth at flood-tide, when the ocean pushes back the Orinoco current and carries one into the river mouth.

This is exasperating, but there is nothing for it but to eat more biscuits and sardines and steer south again. We give the wheel to Charlie, watching him like hawks, however, and go back to the cushions in the stern.

"I never told you how I joined the U.S. Army, did I?" inquires Fitzgerald.

"You did not."

"Well, it was this way. When the Spanish War broke out I was putting up a telephone line in Barbados. Just as soon as I heard that the Americans had occupied Porto Rico I dropped everything and jumped on board a sailing-

vessel. When we got to Porto Rico a young lieutenant would not let me land on account of the blockade. I said, 'Take this note to the General,' and wrote on a slip of paper, 'An American who speaks Spanish as good as he does English isn't allowed to land.' In an hour they had me on shore and made me interpreter for the General. Now, you know, I am an engineer." This you are quite prepared to believe. "And it was not long before they put me in charge of the port works, to handle all the workmen that loaded and unloaded. The General said he wanted me regular, so they gave me a captain's commission in the 69th New York Volunteers. I liked the job. Everything was mixed up, and I was drawing two salaries—one from the United States as captain, and one from the Provisional Government of the island. I had a regular contract for serving as Port Engineer, and I held the men to their

work. One of my superiors had tried to get me to sign a contract which was half graft, and I blocked it and got him fired. I am for graft every time here in South America when you're after something, but it ain't right when you're in *our* service.

"Then a new General came, and he began sniffing around. I had a trucking business on the side, and he asked about this business. 'Can't a man invest his money as he likes?' I said. Soon he got fussy about my salaries, and tried to stop one of them. I got pretty sore at this. I had a contract for a year, and I made him come across. Then I resigned, and all the men went on strike because they liked me.

"In three days he was around begging me to come back. In time I relented and said I would straighten out his strike for him, so I went down with a couple of kegs of beer and gave the dockers a talk. I told them that the new man was

CLIFFS NEAR CEDROS POINT

a better fellow than he seemed, and they must do right by him. I told them I was tired of the job and could make more money. The old General offered me a commission in the Regulars if I would go to the Philippines with him. But a tornado had struck Porto Rico, and there was a lot of contract work to be done on the island, so I resigned; I wish sometimes I had stayed in the service." Being a little downcast, he gets out the mouth-organ again.

In due time we are off Cedros Point, that long, narrow neck of land which pointed to the Conquistadores the way to the Orinoco and El Dorado. Venezuela is not in sight; we pass the point and enter the Serpent's Mouth. The tide-race of which Columbus wrote to the King of Spain is marked only by ripples.

The swell of the sea in long, smooth waves over which we glide presently grips the "Geraldo." The wind is astern, and

we steer dead south. All of a sudden the boat turns completely around and faces Trinidad. Joe is at the wheel.

"What are you doing there?" howls Fitzgerald. "Drop the wheel!" He takes it himself. We have not gone a hundred yards before the boat does the same thing again. The tiller is helpless. Some whirlpool has swung the boat about bodily, though only a little swirl on the surface shows the whirlpool's location. No harm done, but it jerks one's nerves a little.

The wind freshens measurably. White caps are on the waves. Gulls fly by, shrieking hoarsely, or poise alongside. The wind is still astern.

Up ahead now looms a solitary rock, the Sentinel—"El Soldado." Sharp and menacing it stands. We steer to seaward of it, as we are making for one of the eastern outlets of the river and the wind is favouring us.

But is the wind favouring us? It has

changed, and is blowing every moment more heavily in towards Soldado from the sea on our beam. The tide is going the same way—always towards Soldado. We have passed this to starboard now, and can see a line of breakers to leeward where a mile-long row of jagged rocks runs shoreward.

"It is lucky that blighted engine has not balked again," you remark. "We would be on the rocks in ten minutes if it did." Hardly are the words spoken before the engine gives a couple of gasps, starts convulsively again, gives a last dull explosion, and—stops.

One does a lot of quick thinking at such a time. If the boat goes to pieces on those reefs to leeward, can we swim athwart the current to Soldado, or will we be swept past it and have to swim the six miles to Venezuela? Can we climb Soldado's steep sides if we do reach it? Will we be picked off *en*

route by a shark?—the water is alive with them. Will we have to wait a fortnight without water for a boat to take us off if we do get to the rock? Fitzgerald fiddles with his engine. A friend has given you a pneumatic mattress. This will make a good life-preserver if you have to swim to Venezuela. You blow it up, put it in the stern, and look at the rocks.

We are a bare hundred yards from the breakers! We had not figured on the rapidity of the tide—six miles an hour it runs here. You jump to the anchor and heave it over. The line runs through your fingers so fast that you cannot fasten it to a cleat. In the last six feet of line you catch it braced around the tiller and make it fast. But the anchor can barely slow down the speed of drifting. You get the mattress ready and stand oar in hand to push past between the reefs if it is possible. Joe and Charlie watch stupidly at the

bow. Everything has happened so quickly that their low-geared thinking apparatus has not had time to work. Fitzgerald stands grimly by his engine. Not a word is said. Then ten feet away appears a wave-lashed rock in advance of the partly submerged reefs. The launch has drifted to the northward, and this is a spur higher than the rest which you had not seen. It is right at hand. "This ends it," you think, standing on the stern, mattress in hand. The main emotion you have is of utter disgust at the whole proceeding.

The current boils around the end of the rock. But to your paralysed astonishment, instead of crashing into it the boat is swirled around its point. The anchor-rope has caught on some providential point and we swing into the slack back-water behind—safe for a moment. You look stupidly at the rock, astounded at not being battered against it. Fitz-

gerald shows real clean grit and presence of mind. He gives his engine a turn, and in this smooth water it makes two expiring kicks and stops. But these two are enough to bring us to the lee side of the spur. We grapple it with pike poles. Joe is pushed ashore with the end of the anchor-rope and a big fish line, doubled, is heaved over and made fast to a jagged point of rock. We are safe.

The two boys stare stupidly back at the row of reefs. You look to the lashings. Fitzgerald takes a deep breath, glances around, and then makes for the locker. He gets out a bottle of the champagne, sacred to official entertainment, and as the launch heaves giddily with the swell, in the lee of the rock all hands take a drink.

After a council of war it seems best to stay here until the tide changes or the wind dies down. The engine is doctored up until it is apparently in perfect order.

THE SERPENT'S FANGS

The boys, with oars and pike poles, hold the boat from battering against the spur. We officers bathe in pools on the rock, not venturing into the sea alongside because the sharks are reputed to like white meat. Around the line of reefs the pelicans and gulls are fishing.

At about four o'clock we cast off from the rock that gave us shelter. We make for the main channel towards Trinidad to avoid the line of reefs. The tide still flows westward, but we figure that it will be ebb shortly, and we must make land by nightfall. Soldado is on our lee now. We steer so as to get from in front of it as fast and as straight as possible. The engine stops again!

The boys take the oars and try to pull us out of the danger zone. But the heavy boat makes no way. Down every moment, closer to Soldado we go. The multitudes of gulls and water-birds that rest on it take alarm and fly out till the air is dark

with them. Two hundred yards from the crag the engine is started once more. You grasp the tiller, look back so as to take the shortest line past Soldado—and the launch wears clear of it a hundred yards away.

The reefs are all to windward now, the Venezuelan coast ahead. The wind is right to make the Pedernales or the Vagre mouth.

As the boat heads inland the water gets a lighter and lighter brown. It is evidently shoaling. Sandbanks and a nest of submerged rocks lying here, is your memory of the chart. Joe hastily heads out to sea and for a spell we go parallel to the coast. The waves strike our quarter—huge white-capped mountains of water. If one of them hits the boat right and fills it, we—swim.

This situation is intolerable. We may be swamped any moment. To stay out six miles from land in this weather is as risky as the hazard of the rocks.

"We've got to get in," you say at last, and take the helm. Straight for the supposed location of the Pedernales passage, with the wind nearly astern, you steer, taking the chance of reef and shoal, lifted now high on the crests of great following waves, the boat leaping forward, buried now deep in their trough.

Joe is sent to heave the lead from time to time. He has picked up this knack and does his job fairly well. Heave: "Five fathoms, sir." Heave: "Four fathoms, sir." Heave: "Three and a half, sir."

We are down to two and a half fathoms, the water is yellow, a rock spouts to port, the sweep of the waves hurls us up and down like a cork, but we keep straight on. The coast of Venezuela gets more and more distinct—a long green wall of mangrove trees. Ahead is a break in their green expanse for which we are steering. The sun is

nearly down. We get almost to the break in the trees—we see the smooth water beyond them.

Right at the edge where sea meets river, the water is churned into a tempest of short, sharp waves. We sweep into them and are shaken like a rat in a terrier's mouth for a hundred yards. Then, just as the sun goes down, we glide behind the trees into the peace of the Orinoco.

For half an hour we ascend the river between the silent forests. Then suddenly the rudder-wire snaps, worn through. We cannot use the wheel, so you go aft and steer by pushing the tiller with your feet. Lucky this mishap also did not befall us an hour earlier! The night falls with its usual rapidity in the tropics. We see a glimmering light ashore, some dimly outlined machinery. We make for it and tie up to the bank.

"We have thrown dice with the Devil and won out," says Fitzgerald.

IV

UP THE ORINOCO

A SHADOWY figure appears above us. "Who's there?" a voice calls. We stumble up the bank and onto a crumbling concrete platform with a rusted iron framework built above it and scraps of broken machinery underfoot. Into the uncertain light of the lantern comes a well-built and almost white mulatto, clad in a ragged shirt, trousers, and a broad-brimmed straw hat. He reaches out to shake our hands.

"You Trinidad men?" he asks; "I am Englishman, too."

A big negro and a little Venezuelan mestizo appear from the darkness. They talk together in Spanish.

The boys work stolidly at the pumps, for we have shipped much water. Dead tired, you sit on the bank waiting for this necessary task to finish. A half-dozen mosquitoes appear and you brush them away. But now it is a score that are assailing you, every moment more. You feel the stings in a dozen places at once. The swarm is around you like a cloud.

The natives, bitten themselves but not so badly, do not at first notice our martyrdom. The Trinidad boy perceives it first. He grins broadly.

"Mosquito very bad one here," he says. "I making fire for you." He scrapes together an armful of dried grass and lights it in the lee of an engine which is falling to pieces from rust. Standing full in the smoke the mosquitoes are not so bad. We ask him how he bears them.

"I must, I watchman here. They being very bad, but I used to them."

"What is your name?"

"Tom."

For a while, with streaming eyes, we stand in the smudge. Tom is lost in thought.

"Have you gun?" he presently asks.

We say that we have.

"Will you shoot me tiger that come into building nights?"

We get back to the boats and dig out our rifles and an electric flash-lamp. Machete in one hand and flash-lamp in the other, Tom guides the way through high grass. Old boilers, engines, lathes, dump cars, all rusted and overgrown with vines, litter the ground. A hundred yards from the bank stands the skeleton of a steel building.

"There I sleep," says Tom, pointing to a shelf high up on the rafters. "At night tiger come under."

We go for a quarter of a mile up a ramshackle narrow-gauge track, over

swampy ground. Stiflingly hot is the night, and the sweat streams down us. We reach at length a second building.

"Here tiger walk," and Tom points to some tracks on the ground. We flash the light around but see no jaguar.

The mosquitoes are worse every instant. On each exposed bit of skin light the insect pests. They bite through the khaki. Tom's shirt is grey with them. No slapping with hand or handkerchief can keep them away. In a hundred spots their poisoned needles pierce you. The swarm blinds you. You breathe them in by mouth and by nose. Never for an instant is there peace. You are choked, tortured, maddened. You have to grip yourself as if for a supreme struggle to keep from a shrieking stampede.

Almost on a run we hasten back to the first building and start a smudge, and as the dense black cloud of smoke rolls

up around you and the bites stop it is like a reprieve from hell.

"Tiger come here later," says Tom, and rolls a big gear-wheel into the smoke for you to sit on. "I cook dinner."

Into a tin goes a most uninviting and scraggy piece of meat, then plantains and onions, sliced with the machete. This mixture is boiled over the fire. In another tin, black coffee is brewed. Fitzgerald goes back to the boat; he will have none of it. You do not want to hurt Tom's feelings, for he has been as courteous as a grandee, and the tiger is, he asserts, due around. So you try his soup and some of the coffee with a piece of cassava bread. The hot coffee is not so very bad. The cassava bread looks like a flat bath sponge and tastes as it looks.

The fire dies down. The mosquitoes come back in swarms, the jaguar does not come. At last you too retreat to the boat. Fitzgerald is wideawake, fighting

mosquitoes. Rabelais would blush at his language.

You crawl beneath the mosquito bar, dead tired, and fall asleep despite the bites. It is not for long, however; in three or four hours you wake. The net is full of the pests, who have either found the meshes passable or have located an entrance underneath. Your hands and even your body, covered by the thick khaki cloth, are raw with their stings. Only the utter exhaustion of the last two days enabled you to sleep at all. Fitzgerald is already up and seated by a smudge. Haggard in the grey of [the morning, with bleeding face and hands, he looks as one newly carried from the torture-chamber.

At last the sun comes out over the green forest, and the mosquitoes no longer besiege us. We are on the border of a wide pitch deposit covering several acres. Evidently extensive works to dig and

remove this were started, a great plant-equipment bought, and then the whole thing abandoned. It is a battlefield of industrial defeat. Only Tom is left to watch for a shilling a day the shattered machinery.

He strips and dives into the water from the concrete landing-stage. "Not shark here," he calls. We all bathe and change our clothes. The world begins to look better. A pair of parrots fly from the woods behind with their loud shrieks. Far overhead goes a flock of scarlet ibises. Gulls and divers skim by. An egret, snowy-white against the green mangroves, perches on the opposite river-bank.

We clean up ship and repack, getting in somewhat better shape. By eight o'clock we are ready, and after leaving some eatables and drinkables as a present for Tom and his friends, we start on our belated way.

Pedernales is about a mile off. We soon sight its straggly row of about twenty low-thatched adobe houses, with a few dugout canoes moored to stakes in front, and begin to steer shoreward. We land on a pile of stones and scramble up the bank. The whole population is on hand—a slovenly outfit showing all possible permutations and combinations of negro, Indian, and Spaniard. One of these, a little cleaner and more authoritative than the rest, is pointed out as the Commandante.

Now comes the crucial time. How are we to be received? We are already liable to arrest for having landed last night on unauthorized Venezuelan territory. And our future halts on the way up the Orinoco depend on getting domestic clearance papers despite the fact that we come from a foreign port.

Fitzgerald in any event has the assurance of an army mule. He makes

for the Commandante and grasps his hand with the warmth of a candidate for Congress in a close district.

"Buenos dias, amigo, com' esta!" He starts to tell in dramatic Spanish the perils we encountered at Soldado. While the Commandante's mind is thus kept occupied, Joe, well-coached beforehand, has appeared with a bottle of whisky and some glasses. We have edged up to the official headquarters by this time, and with expansive gestures have invited all and sundry to have a drink. At the same time our clearance papers are handed to the Commandante.

We get rid of two bottles of whisky at Pedernales, and, after wringing the hand of every male inhabitant, leave with a paper, artistically extracted from an official who is not authorized by any law under the sun to give such a document, permitting us to make stops on the way up the river. Fitzgerald, by

elaborating upon your letters to the Presidente and adding his own blarney, has bluffed the licence out of the Commandante.

"Very well done, Fitz," you say as the boat chugs out. And Fitzgerald winks.

To go up the Orinoco by the Pedernales passage we have been told to enter the first opening on the port side after passing a near-by point. We see this caño, but it looks too narrow to be the real one. So we keep on going and enter a broad bay with rather choppy seas. After a couple of miles of this we enter a wider passage, which turns out to be the rarely traversed Vagre mouth of the Orinoco.

The mangrove-trees are like a wall on either side of the broad still river. All seem to have reached a standard height above water-level; the labyrinthic network of their roots drops from the

ALONG THE ORINOCO

branches to the water. It is like a phalanx of gigantic spiders, standing in the still water with their black legs interlocked and bearing a burden of towering foliage on their backs. No more impenetrable wall could be devised. Nothing but monkeys, birds, and crabs can possibly penetrate a mangrove swamp. Of these there is the greatest possible number. Birds are everywhere. Big white and grey cranes are all along the river. Fishers of every kind dive down beside the boat. Ibises rise in a flock of scarlet. The "croaking hoatzins," relics of the reptilian age, strange birds with fingers under their feathers, shriek and flop awkwardly from bough to bough. We shoot some, for they are as big as pullets and look good to eat. But they smell badly and are tough as mangrove stems. Even Charlie and Joe decline them.

Less than a day gets us past the

mangrove swamp. These trees still occur, but there is no longer the solid wall of them. Land high and dry has begun, jungle with every kind of tree—banana, bamboo, mora, cedar, ten-foot grass, creepers and vines swinging in matted loops. We shoot two males of the big red howling monkey, sitting on a bare branch, and though the tree out of which they fall is but 20 feet from the water's edge, it takes two hours to find a spot at which to make a landing, get up the steep clay bank, and cut with machetes a way in, and we can only get one of the monkeys.

Further along we find a landing-place where balatá cutters have come. We land and ease our hunger with cold victuals and coffee. Two manatees poke their noses up out of the river from time to time and snort. One never sees more than the nose of a sea-cow, and that only for an instant. A fresh-water por-

poise jumps up. More monkeys are in the woods behind, but we let them alone.

The trip from Pedernales is delightful. It is entirely cool and comfortable in the moving boat even at midday. The thermometer under the awning does not show over 85°. We anchor at sunset in a shallow place amid stream and not a mosquito appears. It is cool at night—about 68°, and even a little chilly towards morning. A breeze from the sea—the trade wind—blows gently astern. The murmur of the forest is on either side. From time to time the snort of a manatee breaks the stillness, but for the rest all is quiet.

As on the morrow we go on up the river we pass infrequent banana plantations kept by mestizos and Guarano Indians. A native dugout passes silently from time to time. These Indians are curious little people, hardly averaging

5 feet high. We stop at some of their landing-places.

In one of the palm-thatched shelters open on all sides to the wind are half a dozen women and children. They speak no Spanish and seem to take no interest whatever in anything. A dozen wicker baskets of different shapes and sizes hold their belongings. With one of these baskets, 5 feet long and very slender, they make cassava. Tuberous roots looking like elongated sweet potatoes, taken from a tree which is of the same family as the Ceara rubber plant, are first peeled and washed. Next they are grated on a kerosene tin which has had holes punched in it with a nail. The gratings are thrown into the long narrow basket and squeezed. Stones are put upon it and everybody climbs onto the stones to help out the process. The compression is to get rid of the juice, which contains poisonous hydrocyanic

ABORIGINAL GUARANO INDIANS

acid. The lumps of meal remaining are baked in flat cakes about 2 feet in diameter. Bread from a deadly poison!

A number of children are running about in this encampment. One little boy has several scars scored in parallel lines down his heel. "Caiman (crocodile)," says his mother after our repeated questions. The children all have protruding stomachs. Some say this is because they have the rickets; some, because they eat cassava bread and drink water, a combination which bloats them; others, that it is because the babies are not swaddled after they are born. Take your choice.

The woods thin out in places as we ascend the Orinoco. Sandbars on which an occasional crocodile suns himself are met here and there. We shoot several, which squirm back into the water. In one place we get up a caño that leads nowhere, and have to come back and try again through

a narrow gap down which the river races at a good 7 miles an hour—so strong a current that we can hardly make headway. We run aground badly in a wide place, and have to go overboard, in deadly fear of alligators and sting-rays, and push off.

At length, after passing a big island, we are out of the Delta and enter the Orinoco proper. We are running short of gasolene, but Fitzgerald knows of a Corsican woodcutter a few miles up stream who can supply some. Shortly after leaving the Delta we reach a town situated on high ground — Barrancas, meaning the Sandbanks—and tie up alongside one of the war-vessels of the Venezuelan Navy.

This vessel is fully 35 feet long. Her Captain is asleep in his hammock, with one bare foot sticking through. We do not wake him, but get out a bottle of beer so as to have it available. We now

get the "Geraldo" in order, clean ourselves, change into some fresh linen, climb up on to the deck of the man-of-war, and order its *cocinero* to boil our coffee.

In good time El Capitan wakes and we introduce ourselves. The process is like the old nursery rhyme about the kitty:—

"You pet her and stroke her and feed her with food,
And kitty will love you because you are good."

"Will El Capitan sample some Trinidad beer?"

El Capitan will "con mucho gusto."

El Capitan finds the beer drinkable and the cigars smokable. He accompanies his *amigos* up to El Commandante. El Commandante finds the beer drinkable, the cigars good, and the clearance papers in perfect order. He returns with us to the war-vessel for dinner.

El Capitan is a mighty man of valour. He has curly yellow hair and choleric

blue eyes. He possesses a sword a yard and a half long. A dozen Mauser rifles to arm the crew are piled in the wardrobe among his soiled linen. His is an important post, for the boat dominates this part of the river, to the terror of all smugglers, except, of course, such as may be *amigos*.

He mellows as the meal progresses, and tells of an arrest he made when he was a policeman on land before he became a ruler in the Presidente's navee.

"You know the road from Paragua to San Felix," he starts. "I was once riding out on the llanos that way, and I stopped at a woman's house to drink coffee. I heard a pedlar insisting that she buy something which she did not want to buy. I went in and he became polite and left. I noticed that he was a Turk"—by which El Capitan probably means an Armenian.

"I drank coffee and went on. Next day I was near there, and I noticed

vultures wheeling around. When I see *zamuros* I always go look what is dead, and I found a Turkish woman and girl, not long dead, with their eyes picked out. I went away and sent somebody to bury them.

"Now when I came to San Felix, I went into the inn there, and I saw that same Turk eating dinner. When he saw me he went to his room without finishing. 'That is queer,' I thought, and waited for him to come out. I then said to the landlord, 'Go tell the Turk I want to see him.' The Turk told the *posadero*, 'I am sick and cannot come.'

"So I went to the door and said, 'Open, or I shoot you through the door." He did not open, so I kicked in the door and arrested him. 'You murdered that woman and girl,' I said. 'Confess, or I shoot.' So he confessed.

"I sent word to the Jefe Civil to know what to do with him. The Turk offered

much money and begged to be let off. He said the woman was his wife and they had quarrelled. But I would not; word came to take him to Bolivar and shoot him if he tried to escape.

"I took a sergeant and two men and started for Bolivar. A mile out the sergeant told the Turk to get down and tighten his saddle. Then he shot him through the head. One of the soldiers had a shovel, so we buried him and went back. That is what is meant by 'shoot him if he tries to escape.' They were content in Bolivar and promoted me." He takes a gulp of the warm beer.

The Commandante is inspired to tell a tale.

"One day when I was stationed at Apure, I was riding along the bank in the dusk, with the river below me, when I heard a groan. I slid off my mule and drew my revolver. On my hands and knees then I crawled down until I could

see the outline of a man's outstretched figure. 'Esta Usted bueno?' ('Are you all right?') I called out. I heard only a groan. I asked again. 'Agua, agua,' the man called back, 'I die of thirst.' I came down and saw he had been shot behind the neck. I had a flask of white rum, which I offered. Then I went cautiously to the river and got water in my sombrero. He drank it in great gulps, and I propped him against a tree and questioned him: 'Who shot you?' 'Lorenzo,' and I wrote it down. Then he told how Lorenzo was jealous of him and coming back from a dance had shot him. I dragged the wounded man to the road. After a time a mule-train came by. We tied a blanket between two poles and put him, still groaning, on to the stretcher and took him 10 miles to town. He died a few days after. Lorenzo was identified by what I had written down and had to go to prison for a year."

Far be it from Fitzgerald to be stumped in such a competition.

"While I was Prefect of Police at Maragoto, in Peru," he began, "there occurred the murder of a very wealthy and important cattle-raiser named Rodriguez who had an estate a little distance from the city. In every way we tried to find the murderers, but could not.

"A year later a man loafing in the market-place noticed two foreign-looking men pass. As they went by, one pointed out half a dozen blackbirds and remarked to the other, 'There are Rodriguez's witnesses.' The second man laughed and said, 'Yes, there they still are.' Now Rodriguez was so important a man that he who heard the two became suspicious, and came and told me what had passed. I said at once, 'Those are the murderers.' I sent and had them arrested, kept in separate cells and lashed, until they explained their words. They finally con-

fessed. They had robbed Rodriguez of two thousand dollars and then had murdered him. He had begged for his life, but they feared he would tell the tale, and so killed him. Before he died a flock of blackbirds passed over, and he lifted his hands, saying: 'You blackbirds are witnesses of my death. See that I am revenged.' The Italians had gone to Italy for a year, had spent the money, and returned to be discovered by the witnesses of Rodriguez. I had them shot next day."

"Qué maravilla!" exclaims the Commandante.

"Es posible?" asks El Capitan.

"Yo le aseguro à Usted que es la verdad, palabra de caballero," says Fitzgerald without the quiver of an eyelid—"on his faith as a cavalier!"

The veracious tales carry us well through dinner. We go on shore and leave some soiled clothes with the

Two small Indian boys about twelve years old are seated at the front of the frail cockleshell. They make a good landing and Mattey himself climbs up. He is a little wizened Corsican, fiery of temper and rapid of speech. He is engaged in getting out timber on General Desham's concession. Just at present he is cutting telegraph-poles for the Presidente's electric-light plant at Bolivar. Mattey is down now to see some people due on the "Delta," which arrives the day after to-morrow from Trinidad. "Bien sûre" he can and will supply us with enough gasolene to go to San Felix, perhaps enough to get us to Bolivar.

Being relieved on this score, we consider dinner. What is our horror to find that while drinks, Worcester sauce, pepper, baking-powder and vinegar abound, there are no tinned meats or fish or beans left. Somebody with an enormous appetite has been stealing. It does not take long to

light on Joe, who had charge of the keys to the lockers and lost them so that nothing could be locked up.

A council of war is held.

"Shoot him," says El Commandante. "Nobody will mind," adds El Capitan. "Throw him overboard," says Mattey. Fitzgerald is for "marooning." "Send him back to Trinidad by the 'Delta,'" you suggest. Pending a decision, a motion to whale him is unanimously carried and executed. We go ashore and buy provisions of enormous price and dubious pedigree.

Next morning, while waiting for the "Delta," Mattey suggests that we drop down and call on the Germans who are putting up a meat-extract factory just beyond Barrancas. We take the launch to their landing and find a big blond German with a gang of men fishing out a dump car that has fallen into the river. We follow the track a short distance in-

land. Concrete buildings are in course of construction. Beyond them is a very cosy wooden house, of the most welcome contrast to the crazy shacks of Barrancas and Pedernales.

A remarkably good-looking German hausfrau appears for a moment, and a bare-legged blond boy comes around the corner of the porch, looking like a youngster fresh from the beach of Scheveningen. Mr. Max Dude, the manager, hurries out and gathers us in. We are invited to the forthcoming meal—breakfast or lunch, whichever one chooses to call it.

The Dude family has come from some place near the border-line between Brazil and Bolivia—a place that nobody ever heard of.

"It took five changes of steamers to get back to Hamburg," says Frau Dude plaintively, "but I got first prize for my hat with the aigrette plumes when I did get home."

The meal is "echt Deutsch," and finely cooked. Frau Dude explains that she holds the whip over the cook personally or nothing would ever be right.

Herr Dude is banking on the Malthusian law. "Where is the world to get meat in the next fifty years? The United States is raising barely enough for its own use. Argentina and Australia supply England now. Prices are always rising, and there is never enough. Venezuela is the only great cattle area left, and it is almost untouched. We have moved up here and settled where ocean steamers can come and tap Venezuela. We can't ship much beef yet, but we begin and get the start for the future. After a while we will have here places like Armours', and these will be German.'

The "Delta" is due at four o'clock, and it stays for only an hour. We watch the clock anxiously. Herr Dude disdains the "Delta"; he bets Mattey a bottle of

champagne she won't be in that night. But about six she appears. We make an engagement for dinner at seven to pay bets, and hurry for our launch.

Hon. Robert Henderson, United States Consul at Ciudad Bolivar, Henry Wadsworth, a young American engineer coming down to put in the Presidente's electric plant, and an assortment of Venezuelan beauties are on board. Fitzgerald lines the officers up at the bar to see if he can jolly them into breaking the law and putting off some of his own gasolene which is on board. It does not work this time, so we have to fall back on Mattey.

Later we go up with the timber-cutter to his bachelor quarters in Barrancas. The house has the same tumble-down appearance as the rest. The rear half is in ruins. Mattey lives in the first two rooms, which are furnished with a table, a hammock, and a barrel of gasolene. We load some of our empty cans, take a cup

of very good coffee, and then start back to the German's.

It is a wild night at Dude's. We are the only even partly-civilized people whom they have seen for months. Frau Dude is charming, Fitzgerald entertaining as ever, and Mattey shows real Gallic salt and surprising erudition. A remark of his, characterizing work in Venezuela as "a filling of the jars of the Danaïdes," comes startlingly in our environment.

When the "Delta" bet has been paid two or three times over, Fitzgerald propounds to the unsuspecting Teuton the addition to his gang of labourers of one able-bodied wharf-rat named Joe, strong, courageous, accustomed to turning heavy flywheels.

"Gewiss, gewiss!" assents Herr Dude willingly, for labour is hard to get up here.

This seems hardly fair to the host, so you intimate, as tactfully as possible, lest

he back out of the bargain, that the aforesaid Joe, while possessing many virtues, is not likely to achieve nervous breakdown by reason of too great industry and has a remarkable appetite for rum and canned goods left unlocked.

"Der Schweinhund!" says Herr Dude. "Never mind, he can't steal my donkey-engine. The cook will give him plenty bananas and cassava. I take him."

Fairly late the party breaks up. Joe is left like Dido on the bank. The captain is able to navigate the "Geraldo" to Mattey's lumber-camp, a mile up stream on the right bank.

The camp-fires are burning when we arrive, but not a soul is to be seen. "The Indians don't know the launch," Mattey says, laughing; "they think we are a commission." This seems rather an extreme view to take regarding government by commission, but Mattey explains: "Taxes have been imposed upon the

Indians which they can't pay. Then commissions come and seize them to work off the taxes. So the men take to the woods when an official appears."

Mattey shouts lustily into the darkness of the night, calling certain names.

The camp consists of a dozen shelters of palm thatch, each built between two trees and having a hammock stretched underneath. Fires are alight in three or four places to drive away the mosquitoes. The head of a huge fish is roasting on a framework of saplings. We sample a piece of it, and also the red berries lying in a gourd on the ground.

Some sharp eyes eventually recognize Mattey and the Indians hear his shouts and come back—a half-dozen men and as many women and children. Some of them wear clothes. They go tranquilly to their fires and presently to their little hammocks. By and by Mattey climbs

into his, after pulling down the mosquito bar, and we go back to the boat.

Charlie has fixed up our mosquito net. But here you, taking as a proven premise that the net is no good for keeping out mosquitoes, try a new method for beating them. No one ever heard of a turtle being troubled by mosquitoes; obviously you must adopt his system. Now the inflated mattress that so nearly saw service as a life-preserver is covered with a case of heavy canvas. Taking out the rubber air-mattress there is left a canvas bag 7 feet long, and just wide enough to wriggle into. You crawl inside this and cover all your head except your nose with a bath towel.

"I don't see how you can stand it," says Fitzgerald, getting under his mosquito net.

"A Turkish bath is better to sleep in than a menagerie," you retort from the depths of the bath towel.

It works like a charm. Breathing is

entirely feasible and you are unpleasantly hot only in the early evening. You get nine hours of good sleep in the open air, while at dawn Fitzgerald wakes with his face a mass of lumps, like a toad.

Next morning we go, through woods with no underbrush and only the hanging vines to trouble, to the lagoon behind the camp, and paddle around to get some shooting. It is a good percentage bag. We fire four shots and bring back a monkey, a hawk, a dove, and a white crane. There are no aigrettes on the crane, which is a male. The aigrettes are generally secured from the females in the breeding season, for the birds are wild and can be approached only at that time. Venezuela has passed a law that these white cranes are not to be shot, and the aigrette-hunters are supposed to pick up the feathers on the water. It is about as likely that this law will be enforced as that Sunday closing will be

MONKEY STEAKS

observed in New York under a Tammany administration.

Back in the camp, one of Mattey's Guaranos skins our monkey. This and the dove we eat. The Indians make away with the hawk and the crane.

Charlie develops unsuspected sentimentality about sampling the monkey. "I eat *him* if you do, sir," he finally says plaintively. The monkey is not very large and we consume most of it, Charlie disposing of his full share once he has started. Except for being a little tough the flesh is very good.

In the afternoon we take a dugout coriara and paddle up a little river which is only 30 feet wide where it joins the Orinoco, but which widens beyond to 200 feet. There should have been crocodiles here in numbers, but they were cleaned out, we learn, at the rate of two hundred a night by some Swedish pot-hunters a while ago.

We shoot four divers, but can recover only one. They disappear permanently when wounded, apparently clinging to the bottom.

Some distance up this river we strike inland towards the savanna. For a quarter of a mile we go through woods without underbrush. Then there is a treeless place with sabre-grass as high as the head. A dense hot moist jungle follows, impassable save by the trail we are following. Then comes a half-mile stretch of grass, waist-high. Another group of chapparal-trees appears, looking like a gnarled orchard, the trunks spaced 40 feet to 60 feet apart as if artificially done. Finally comes the savanna, or plains of coarse grass 6 inches to 12 inches high. A few isolated thickets show up here; the mountains are in the distance. A herd of wild cattle is browsing on a distant stretch of llanos, but the binoculars show no game in sight.

The sun is blistering, so we get back to the coriara, paddle down to the launch, and start up the Orinoco once more.

We pass the battlemented heights of Los Castillos, where young Raleigh fell in the assault of San Thomé, and arrive next day late at San Felix. This is the most pretentious place yet. The town stands on the top of a high bank, where a column of mottled stone commemorates some forgotten general. A herd of fine-looking beeves is grazing on the slope. Burros loaded with balata, just in from the rubber forests, stand waiting to be relieved of their burdens. A four-mule prairie schooner jingles past on the road to the Callao mining district, 100 miles away.

After the usual proceedings with the Commandante we go up to the Hotel Colon. This is kept by a Corsican, immigrated only four months ago. Pictures of Napoleon deck his walls. A slovenly

wife, a good-looking, but equally slovenly *belle-sœur*, and a stark-naked baby complete his family.

A travelling theatrical troupe is stopping with them. It consists of M. de los Rios, Prestidigitateur and master of "Oriental Blak Arts," and Miss Judhit, singer and puppet-manipulator. The Professor is clean-shaven and very thin. He wears a skin-tight brown pepper-and-salt suit. Miss Judhit is tall, gaunt, and angular, and has dark eyes. She wears a red gauze waist, and keeps a tame parakeet on the tree in the courtyard. An English engineer of doleful aspect down from the mines is on hand. He smokes a pipe constantly and never says a word to anybody. An elderly local financial light with a prejudice against shaving, a bearded Corsican merchant from Callao, and a young Spanish-German, son of a big merchant in Bolivar, complete the quota of guests.

We get a rather good dinner at the Hotel Colon. Fitzgerald considers it due to Lord Byron to make violent love to Miss Judhit, which does not in the least trouble Professor de los Rios. They are to give a performance to-night—that is, probably. The Professor fears that everybody will be down on the river-bank to watch the "Delta," now due from Ciudad Bolivar.

We encourage him and offer helpful suggestions. A procession through the town in costume would be the proper thing.

"Only the priest is allowed to have processions!" the Professor says listlessly.

"The priest can't have them here," cuts in the Corsican merchant. "They threw the last *padre* into the river."

"But that does not help me," protests the Professor.

"Hire men to go down to the bank and, as soon as the 'Delta' leaves, shout

out, ' Let us go to the performance of Professor de los Rios,' " suggests Fitzgerald.

He shakes his head dolefully. " But we can let off fireworks,' he adds, as if on an inspiration.

When nine o'clock comes, the performance being billed, " a las 8 y media en punto " sharp, we help set off fire-crackers and sky-rockets in the hotel courtyard. Nobody bothers about the sparks which fly down onto the thatched roofs of the town.

In the next hour or so, some fifty people, a good half of them children, slouch in, bringing their own chairs. We, who rank as Charter Members and Patrons of the Arts, pre-empt rocking-chairs in the front row. The orchestra takes its place on a bench near the curtain.

The orchestra consists of a leader, Big Guitar, a Trinidad mulatto in grey overalls and undershirt; Big Mandolin, a

Zambo or Negro-Indian combination, in yellow linen with needle-shaped yellow shoes; Little Guitar, a mestizo, or Spanish-Indian half-breed, in blue overalls with a red bandana neckcloth; Mandolin, a full-blooded Indian with a sailor cap and brown trousers. The police force, in a dusky undershirt, beats back the children with the flat of his sabre. The overture is a local *danza* air.

Professor de los Rios finally appears in blue dress-coat and knee trousers and the performance begins. He borrows a handkerchief from a lady, and while a thrill of expectation surges through the crowd, he cuts a hole in it. One peon wants to be shown if this handkerchief is the original. The Professor angrily protests and aims a pistol at the interloper, who cows down behind the man in front. The people on the line of fire edge to one side. There is a gasp of horror and everybody ducks as the Professor fires.

But it is all part of the show. The handkerchief descends intact in a little parachute from the ceiling. Immense relief and thunderous applause from the rather nervous audience. Bows from the Professor and music by the orchestra.

A long *entr'acte* follows, during which the row of piccaninnies look with open mouth at the ceiling whence the parachute fell. The Professor is not crowding attractions. He opens the curtain a little and beckons to Fitzgerald, who goes in behind the scenes. The captain is soon back grinning. "The Professor says there have been paid only two pesos. These people have sneaked in from behind."

Fitzgerald makes himself a collecting agent, and by the help of a dollar of yours gets the pot up to five pesos. The landlord with an improvised bar is doing a thriving trade, meanwhile.

Miss Judhit comes on now to sing a

STREET SCENE IN SAN FELIX

song. Big Guitar is to accompany her. After jockeying for a start they get away, but something goes wrong. The impassioned ditty dies down and Miss Judhit glares wickedly at Big Guitar. You can imagine the Duchess of "Alice in Wonderland" ordering "Off with his head!" They try again. Poor Big Guitar is flustered by his previous failure and wilts beneath the acid frown of the *señorita*. The air trails off in doleful discords. Miss Judhit stamps her foot, mutters a "Caramba!" and flees from the stage.

The Professor nervously comes forward and explains that the accompanist is inexperienced, but that he himself will do the wonderful lost-coin trick. Miss Judhit holds the glass, glaring now and again at the unlucky Big Guitar, between her professional smiles at the audience. The coin is of course miraculously found in a negro boy's ear, much to his sur-

prise and that of his friends. With this the show ends. After due felicitations to the troupe we stumble sleepily back to the river, and out to bed, via a plank and a schooner to which we have tied.

We inspect next day the falls of the Caroni, set in the tropic forest, one of the most beautiful sights possible—"that wonderful breach of waters," Raleigh described it. We take the Commandante and his guitar along and the Spanish-German youth.

On the way we break a mirror, and return to find that our gasolene will not take us to Bolivar and that the reserve supply expected on the returning "Delta" has not come. A telegram says it is on the way in a sailing vessel. Five days' dead loss, waiting at San Felix, is the significance of this.

It cannot be borne. Several sailing vessels are at anchor before the town. You send word to the captain of each

that any one will receive the large sum of five pesos who will sail at once and take you to Bolivar. Only one captain is willing to negotiate—he is sailing next day anyway.

This officer sends back word that he will consider the offer, which is not very promising, so we all go ashore for lunch. Just as the meal is about to begin Charlie comes up panting. "The captain sail-boat say he go Bolivar now." You take precipitate leave of Fitzgerald, and start for the river.

"I'll meet you at Mannoni's Hotel," he calls.

You jump into the coriara which serves as tender, hurriedly load in two tins of sardines, a piece of cheese and a can of corn, and climb aboard the "Hijo de Dios."

The boat is a sloop, rigged with an auxiliary lateen sail which is used as a spinnaker in running before the wind.

A microscopic cabin like a well lies just forward of the tiller. One coriara is towed astern, another smaller dugout is lying on the deck, which is covered with a mess of disordered ropes and blocks. The red, blue, and yellow flag of Venezuela with its seven stars floats at the peak.

The captain is a thin, hawk-nosed mestizo in an undershirt and once white trousers. The first officer is a tough-looking indeterminate who stands by the helm. A villainous set of three deckers, including the dirtiest *cocinero* that ever maltreated victuals, complete the crew.

The other passengers are four Indian girls, all smoking cigars, three naked children and one Zambo peon. The girls' baggage consists of a bunch of bananas, some pieces of cactus, a parrot tied by one leg, and a puppy.

The vessel gets under way with a good trade wind behind at about half past one on Sunday. The captain gives you, to sit

upon, a heap of tarpaulin against the mast, in the shade of the sail. The *cocinero* lights a fire of faggots in a big wooden box with sand in its bottom, and brews coffee, which is passed around. The ladies puff at their cigars. One of the children, apparently not over three years old, picks up his mother's stub and sucks at it.

We read and smoke and look stupidly at the landscape, and wriggle uncomfortably all through the long afternoon. The cook makes up a dinner consisting of coffee, boiled rice, cassava bread, and the stringiest and toughest beef this side of leather.

Presently the passengers compose themselves to sleep. The Indians lie wedged like sardines on the roof of the cabin. You are just behind the mast; the puppy comes and curls up beside you.

All through the early part of the night the captain, the mate, and the Zambo

peon argue at the top of their voices. Occasionally they shriek in falsetto. The discussion seems to be about an infinitesimal sum of money. You doze fitfully through it, while with a strong wind behind the boat is ploughing its way up stream.

Suddenly there is a chorus of cries, stamping of feet and rattling of ropes. The boom swings over in a jibe. The throat halyards of the lateen sail part, and it comes down with a bang, knocking one of the crew into the river. The night is pitch dark; confusion of the pit reigns. After you have been walked over, the dog stepped on, and everything bedevilled generally, things are fixed up and we go on again, the castaway climbing back complacently.

With malicious frequency now the boom swings across, and you find your head in the scuppers, your feet high up to windward, and have to crawl around.

About one in the morning the night is so dark that the mate does not dare sail any more for fear of the rocks, and he drops anchor. The negro passenger comes and sleeps beside you, the captain climbs into the dugout on deck, the mate curls up by his tiller.

Before daybreak you awake, stiff from the hard deck. The parrot is screeching and there is a flat calm. The cook makes more coffee and passes it around. In a couple of hours a little puffy breeze arises. We lift anchor and crawl slowly up the river.

Until about three o'clock in the afternoon this weather continues and we advance at a snail's pace. The sun is like the opening of a furnace, beating down from above. The only shade is forward of the mast, where there is no room to sit and where the filth of the cook-stove and its smell are worse almost than the torrid sun, which continues to glare down

on us savagely all through the day. The captain has an old umbrella, under which he reads a Spanish edition of Dumas' "Deux Diane." The Indians and the crew are used to the climate and roast stoically.

In the middle of the afternoon, quite unheralded, a swirl of dust appears on a sandbank of the left shore a mile away. "Chubasco!" cries the mate excitedly, pointing to it. "Chubasco"! One of the dangerous storms peculiar to the Orinoco is upon us. The captain shouts an order and the crew jump to their feet and lower everything but the jib. Save for that dust-whirl in the distance nothing stirs, and the water is like glass. Then all in a moment comes a rush of wind. The lightning flashes, dark clouds appear from nowhere and pour down a deluge of rain. The passengers get under tarpaulins and cower; the sailors take it as it comes and are drenched in a moment.

In half an hour the storm has died down. You crawl out. Sail is hoisted, and with only another parted halyard we reach the spot where the negro peon is to land. His coriara, which was towed astern, is brought alongside and loaded with bananas and sugar-cane from the hold. With praiseworthy dexterity the crew steal several bananas and pieces of cane as they pass these down. The passenger counts out some money to the captain and pushes off.

Night comes on again, but afar off we see the lights of Bolivar. There is almost no wind. A slight drizzle of rain is falling. We go up a dangerous channel with rocks like a manatee's back, close alongside. At last we cast anchor before the town. It is half past one: we have been thirty-six hours out from San Felix.

You feel that you could stand anything save staying on the "Hijo de Dios" another

night. Luggage cannot be landed, because it must pass the custom-house. But you, in bedraggled khaki, can land if fancy moves. The dugout takes you to a bank so steep that you have to use hands and knees to scramble up. Covered with sand and dirt, which stick to your wet clothes, you reach the parapet and start to find a hotel. The street lamps are burning, but not a soul is in sight. A little way down you meet a drunken sailor. He can hardly navigate, much less talk. Farther on is a boyish sentry with a long Mauser musket; he politely leaves his post and guides you to the "Gran" Hotel.

You push in through the door and try to wake a negro boy asleep in a hammock. No idea whatever can penetrate his head. He falls into a doze as he stands. At length a mulatto woman with a candle appears. "No rooms — go away — no rooms!" she says hospitably. Arguments

avail nothing. Besides, the stone floor is as little inviting as the "Hijo de Dios" deck.

Out into the cold world you go again and stumble into the market and the Barracks. An old woman turns to the south. "Hotel España esa!" she says, pointing. You stalk over, find it finally, and wake a mestizo in another hammock. In this establishment they are used to parties arriving late and in a battered state. The mestizo leads you upstairs and you thread your way between other hammocks to where he opens the door of a bare, brick-floored room with a chair and a cot constructed of sailcloth stretched upon a frame. It has the semblance of a bed. Feeling like Ulysses cast on Calypso's Isle, without any Calypso, you drop on to the cot and fall into a dead sleep.

V

THE CITY OF BOLIVAR

AT six o'clock you wake, make such a toilet as is possible under the circumstances, and breakfast at the hotel. As you have a letter to the Administrator de Aduana, General Navarro, it seems best to present it before trying to bring your armament ashore.

General Navarro is the soul of courtesy.

"Expect a while," he says. "We heard from Trinidad that you were coming!" You "expect" a while, chatting and smoking his cigarettes. Presently you are agreeably surprised to be told that your belongings are below, ready to be taken away. He has sent a man to get your goods, and has passed them through

without a look or charge. A peon whom he designates as your porter is directed to take your luggage to the Hotel Cyrnos, kept by Mannoni, late of Corsica, and thither you duly follow.

The city of Bolivar looks far less weird in the daylight than it did in the night. A tree-shaded walk along the bank where the band plays in the afternoon stretches in front of the Calle de Orinoco, the main business street.

The river sweeps by below with a rapid current, for the shores converge sharply here, giving the town its former name of "Angostura"—the Narrows. A big rounded rock breasts the current in mid-stream.

The business houses are solidly built, many with lofty galleries projecting over the sidewalk. The American flour importers, Dalton & Co., who have a monopoly of this business, face the steamer landing with their big arched

doorway. Palazzi Hermanos, dealers in general goods and traders in balatá, are a little way up the street; beyond them are José Aquatella, commission merchant, Jules Tomasi, the Corsican, Blohm & Cie., German wholesale and retail merchants.

The booths of the Plaza del Mercado, past which you stumbled the night before, are full of women and peons chaffering for rice and coffee and cheap wares. A bust of General Tomas de Heres gazes fixedly upon the placid ox-teams drawn up alongside.

Beyond the *plaza* stretch the Barracks, where slouchy sentries, clad in rusty brown-cotton uniforms and armed indifferently with shiny old Mauser carbines and Winchesters, look unenthusiastically down on the market-place below. A guard of four soldiers and an officer are standing on the corner watching three convicts sweep the sidewalk.

CALLE DE ORINOCO, CIUDAD BOLIVAR

Farther along is the office and house of the President of the State of Bolivar—Aristides Telleria—for whom the telegraph-poles are being cut by your friend Mattey. A crowd is outside his door talking with his private sentry and waiting for an audience.

Beyond this a narrow street with a flowing gutter down its middle leads up the steep hill. We begin, over the bumpy cobble-stones, a laborious climb. On each side are solid square houses, one or two stories high, with barred windows and a wide doorway. Absolutely unlike Trinidad, with its wooden buildings embowered in palms and flowers are these white, yellow, and slate-coloured houses in solid blocks one against the other, barred and shuttered like prisons.

At intervals you get a glimpse through a doorway and see the central courtyard with a fountain playing or a burro standing ready saddled beneath the arch-

way. At the window of one house, iron-barred, provided with neither glass nor curtains, a girl is sewing. These Bolivar buildings are like the villas uncovered at Pompeii, of frowning exteriors and smiling courts, into whose brightness the living-rooms open through big doorways.

At length Mannoni's Hotel is reached. The brother of the proprietor, who has recently finished his time in the French Army, and threatens to go back because, he says, "There are not enough pretty girls in Bolivar," leads the way to a perfectly clean room looking out on an airy palm-planted courtyard. Three shower-baths are just around the corner.

You are just in time for the half-past eleven meal. There are two main tables at Mannoni's in the breeze-swept room between the courtyards. One, serious, quiet, heavy, is the Anglo-Saxon table, where they put German drummers and stray English travellers. The other is the

Latin table, where Corsicans and Spanish flourish, where M. Mannoni himself sits and where another M. Mattey lays down the law amid difficulties. This table is in a constant state of effervescence, of explosions, of vivid words and far-flung gestures. By virtue of your letter to S. José Aquatella, you are seated here.

As you enter a great discussion is on. Mannoni has just exhibited an ancient revolver, with the proud statement that his great-grandfather carried it in Paoli's fight against the Genoese.

"Mais, c'est impossible," M. Mattey is affirming. "Revolvers were not invented until fifty years ago."

Mr. Robert Henderson, the veteran United States Consul, from a small table of his own midway between Saxon and Latin, stands by M. Mattey. "We did not have cartridges such as would go into that revolver until the Civil War.

Only men with good teeth were enlisted because they had to bite off the cartridges."

Here a Corsican from San Felix breaks in with the statement: "I know Mannoni's family in Corsica, and all the men were hunters and soldiers. So the revolver must have come from his great-grandfather."

"The Germans had the first cartridges with their needle-guns; that is why they beat us in 1870," says M. Mattey.

The argument is still going on in detached fragments when the divers merchants leave the table to go down to their business.

An envoy from General Navarro, a little, weazened Venezuelan official, arrives somewhat later in the afternoon.

"The Presidente invites you to his house at four o'clock, and I, who manage various languages, will meet you at the hotel and accompany you." This is the purport of his message. You are

tempted to suggest "mangle" for manage, but refrain.

In the interim you visit the Consulate of the United States. Mr. Robert Henderson supplies you with American papers only a month or so old and some grafted mangoes, grown on his brother's estate, which taste like peaches.

Just outside the Consulate windows, in the hot sunlight of the river-bank, Wadsworth, the American electrical engineer, who came up on the "Delta," is superintending a gang of twenty stevedores, busy hauling a section of the great flywheel of the Presidente's electric-light plant. Many idlers are looking on.

The scene presents a picture of peace beneath the hot sun. "You should have seen the *plaza* yonder when General Matos, who is now in the Cabinet, was in insurrection against Castro," the Consul observes dreamily. "I did not

think I ought to leave the post, so I stayed here. Two men were behind each of those trees firing across the river at Soledad, where the Government troops were. We had these windows barricaded with sacks of flour and balatá—anything we could get to turn a bullet. The firing was so continuous you could not hear the separate shots. It was a grinding roar like a coffee-mill.

"They fight, I tell you, like devils," he continues. "I saw the *insurrectos* charge the Government troops, machete against rifles. They came round that corner too quick and close for the regulars to kill. The revolutionists were splitting heads like coco-nuts. One hundred and fifty men killed out in front there. Don't let any one tell you these Revolutions are a joke. Two thousand men killed out of seven thousand engaged is what they did here. The cemetery of La Trinidad, where the insurgents of the town were attacked

by Castro's men, was simply heaped with bodies. Go and look at that lamp-post over by Wadsworth before you leave. Those holes are from Mauser bullets."

Wadsworth has hitched to it a block and tackle to give a purchase for his fly-wheel. You stroll across. In the lamp-post, some 4 inches in diameter, there are twenty-two holes. In a telegraph-pole farther along there are thirteen.

"What's up?" asks Wadsworth.

You tell him that you are looking at the bullet-holes.

"Gee!" he says; "I saw them, and thought somebody had done it with a pick." He wipes his forehead and observes cynically: "I'm glad the army is good for fighting. They sent part of it down to help pull up this machinery and the men weren't worth a whoop. I had to engage these stevedores, who get two dollars a day instead of eight cents, like the Army. Gee! but I'm having a time with

this little plant. They told me the foundations were all ready and I only had to set up the machinery. When I got here I found they had made the concrete without gravel and the holes for the engine bed-plate were 8 inches out of true. And slow! This isn't the land of *mañana*, as they say; it is the land of *pasado mañana*—the day after to-morrow."

It is about time to go to the Presidente, so you return to the hotel and wait for your escort. He comes soon, takes a refreshment with you, and then leads the way to the seat of government. The sentry presents arms and a black servant in civilian clothes takes in your card. You are ushered into a parlour overlooking the market-place. A beautiful jaguar rug on the floor, dainty Parisian furniture, and a few engravings are its furnishing.

Almost immediately comes in a fine-looking man of about forty, with a deter-

mined-looking jaw and energy in every movement.

"His Excellency General Aristides Telleria," says your guide, introducing you.

"Sea Usted bien venido," he remarks. "We do not get many Americans travelling for pleasure here. The *señor* is a welcome guest."

You express appreciation of the courtesies extended by the Custom House and the officials up the river, to which he responds by a deprecatory shrug. He asks about the hunting on the way.

"I have hunted all around my own estates in Coro," he says, "but not here. This State of Bolivar is as large as France, and it keeps one somewhat occupied."

You mention having seen his telegraph-poles in process of delivery, and he asks about how many are lying ready for shipment.

"The electric light and the roads are just a beginning," he comments. "We need

so much here—sewers, good waterworks, a railroad into the interior. But it is a long pull. There is so little population, and save for a few merchants the people are so poor."

You remark incidentally that you have seen the river and hope to see something of the interior. Rather to your surprise he says at once, "I will arrange it," and adds the Castilian formula to the effect that his house is yours: "Haga Usted lo mismo que si estuviera in su casa." You pay your respects and presently leave.

Passing up the street, you step in upon Senor José Aquatella, who takes you to the Club Union Commercial. He orders two lemonades, and you sit together on the broad portico overlooking the Calle de Orinoco and the river.

"*Sans blague*, the Presidente is an excellent man," he says. "He is one of the best Governors we have ever had, always working to improve the roads and to en-

courage cattle-breeding. A Presidente can do much. He is a Satrap, supreme over the entire State. If the other Governors were like our General and would help, much could be done with this country. The sleeping riches here are beyond belief. We are simply pecking at the edges. Nobody knows what is in the interior of this Guiana district. But so many officials just milk the cow! Et la vache, c'est nous."

We sip the lemonade and look at the river. "Never mind," he finally says. "Bolivar still stands up above there watching over the city. Let us go and look at him."

In the cool of the late afternoon we climb the cobble-paved hill to its summit, where in the square beside the cathedral, surrounded by palms and flowers, stands the statue of Bolivar and the effigies of the four Republics made from the land he won—Venezuela,

Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. The thin worn features of El Libertador look broodingly down over the city in which he was elected President of Greater Colombia, and from which he started the great winter march across the Andes to break the backbone of Spanish rule on the continent.

We go down to Mannoni's for dinner. One by one the guests stroll in. Wadsworth comes back and changes from his khaki to a shirt and collar. Mr. Henderson appears, then two German drummers, then three Corsican traders and an English tourist whom nothing pleases. M. Mattey and his nephew enter with a young Cuban just arrived. M. Mattey is expounding to him volubly the merits of the city.

"Voyez vous," he declares, "ici il n'y a pas de la fièvre. I have lived here sixteen years, and the only time I was ill was once when I got very angry at a man. Un accès de rage me rendait malade. Of

course, it is hot at this time, but not very—92° to 112° in the middle of the day. The average temperature is 80°, and it is fairly cool generally by night."

The gong sounds for seven o'clock.

"Allons diner," says Mannoni.

"You should say 'Allons souper,'" observes M. Mattey, correcting him.

Mannoni is wounded to the quick that his language and the regime of his establishment should be so questioned. He declares that it is "diner" and nothing else. The rest of the table at which he is now officiating is behind him. Mattey adroitly shifts his ground.

"But if you took your next meal at four o'clock in the morning, it would be *déjeuner*, and you would have had no *souper*."

This puzzles Mannoni sadly. Every possible hour for a repast is imagined, and its title discussed. Señor Aquatella says all depends upon whether you wear

a dress-suit. M. Tomasi opines that it is decided by whether you go to sleep before or after. M. Vicentini believes that if you take white coffee the meal is breakfast, and black coffee it is supper. Mannoni's brother is appealed to as a soldier. He replies that in barracks every meal is called a "pail of slops," which the guests take as a point scored on Mannoni, at which they laugh uproariously.

This question gets no nearer settlement than did the revolver problem. After dinner most of the residents stroll down to the club for billiards, cards, or to talk politics. The others sit and smoke around the courtyard, and very early everybody drops off to bed.

When "El Luchador," the daily paper of Bolivar, is brought around, the wave of discussion waxes hot, although it is the most innocuous sheet ever printed. About half the paper is given up to first, second, and third advertisements of balatá-con-

cession claims, official *pronunciamientos* regarding cattle in the city limits, thatch on houses, and such technical details.

Among the advertisements the familiar Allcock's porous plaster spreads its sticky lure, flanked by many sorts of "Pildoras." A woman in wood-cut begs her husband, whose hand clasps a glass, to put a certain powder into his coffee. This will kill his appetite for drinking, which "is a vice and will ruin us." One Dr. Diaz y Diaz announces to "cultivated society and to the public in general" that he is a "Cirujano Dentista de la Illustre Universidad Central de Venezuela." Some eminently safe and sane leading articles on the Bolivian Medical Congress, the celebration of the 5th of July, the Cattle Pest, the "Labor Noble" of the office-holders, and a few foreign cables constitute the reading matter.

Fitzgerald appears a few days after your arrival. He has measured the Falls of

He takes you up to his residence in the Calle de Constitucion, to meet Señora Palazzi. Their home is on the second story of an old, thick-walled Spanish house, up the hill near Mannoni's. In the hall-way beside the courtyard are a dozen deer-horns, trophies of bygone hunts. Light mahogany furniture is in the rooms. A gilt cabinet for little curios contains nuggets, carved ivories, and Dutch silver.

Señora Palazzi, a slight vivacious Caraceña, clad in the latest Parisian mode, greets you here. English and French she speaks perfectly, thanks to French governesses and two years at Convent, New Jersey. She is in touch with plays, books, and events as recent as the mails allow.

In a dog-cart drawn by her husband's racing stallion she drives you to see the "Morechales," or country places around the outskirts of Bolivar. The low cot-

tages are surrounded by grounds luxuriant in vegetation and abounding in all manner of fruit trees. It is a beautiful drive in the cool of the afternoon, with only occasional bumps where watercourses cross the road. Half a dozen vehicles are on the way, filled with the wealth and beauty of Bolivar. We drive to Maraquita and return to the Palazzis' suburban tract, where they expect soon to build a house.

At present only the stables for three racing horses and the kennels for a dozen tiger-dogs are completed. Curious dogs are these, descendants from the hounds brought over by the Spaniards. They resemble those which one sees in old tapestries, grey-brindled with grey-blue slanting eyes. They have no pedigree, but breed fairly true.

Dinner with the Palazzis is an unceremonious meal to which friends come as they will. At one of these repasts, where

you and a young Venezuelan are guests, Señor Palazzi tells of an expedition he has in view to look for buried treasure.

"This city, you know, was one of the last that was held by the Spaniards during the War of Independence. All the monks from round about and the wealthy land-owners and the officials fled to it. Some brought their possessions, and when Bolivar entered the city, buried them here. A tenant in one of my father's houses up the street found a treasure and left the country a rich man. All these houses were built by the Spaniards and have walls 3 feet thick, with secret closets and floors.

"Many buried money in the country. Eight million pesos' worth of gold is said to have been interred at the old monastery of San Seraphine. When the monks left they gave their Indians a basket of corn, and told them to throw away a grain each day. If no one had come when the corn was gone they were to dig up the

treasure and throw it in the Caroni. Years ago a monk came with the plan of the hiding-place. He found the cave and the mouldering chests. But the treasure was gone; the Indians had kept their word.

"Now only a week ago some peons on an estate of ours found a cave with a doorway to it, bricked up. They started to break the door down, but got frightened of ghosts. I have planned to go there and enter. We may find nothing—we may find a treasure. People don't go to the trouble of bricking up a doorway for nothing. I am afraid of snakes, but not of ghosts."

"The mention of your ghosts," says the Venezuelan, "reminds me of a veracious tale about a peon near our estate who met a veiled figure on a lonely road.

"'Who are you?' said the peon tremblingly.

"'I am the devil,' a voice answered in sepulchral tones. The peon walked up and held out his hand.

" 'Embrace me, *amigo.* I married your sister.'"

Señor Palazzi smiles broadly; Señora Palazzi is a little piqued.

"A disgracefully ungallant story," she says. "I will tell you a better one, and true, too. It is about a young girl, a Caraceña, sixteen years old, who lived with her grandmother. I will not give the real names, though you will know them. We will call the girl Señorita Dolores Blanco. The grandmother belonged to an old Caracas family which had some fine rare port, dating from the time of the Spaniards. The good dame was stingy and would let no one partake of the closely guarded treasure.

"One day Dolores, coming from the garden, hot and tired, found the cave door unlocked and was seized with a

"Juan Garcia's surprise when he learned that Señorita Dolores Blanco had tried to poison herself because of him was very great. But after he had thought it over, had looked at himself in the glass, twirled his moustache and pulled down his tie, he had to admit the girl's good taste.

"'After all,' he meditated, 'I am beginning to tire of the life of a bachelor. This *señorita* is pretty, her family is of the best, and the *dot* is *muy conveniente*. Why not make her happy?' He proposed to her parents, who did not even consult Dolores before giving their consent.

"Señorita Dolores Blanco became Señora Garcia, and they have lived happily ever after. The story leaked out, and though the family denies it, every one in Caracas knows it is true."

Late in the evening, pondering the strange marriages that are made in heaven, you wander back to Mannoni's. You are still early enough to watch a half

THE CATHEDRAL, CIUDAD BOLIVAR

a dozen less startling, but perhaps equally romantic, courtships arranging themselves through the bars of the houses along the hill.

The Académie Française is under discussion at breakfast next morning.

"The Academicians can't even finish a dictionary," says one of the Latin table.

Mattey declares "quand même" that they are the greatest body of men in the world.

"But the Academy refused Fulton's steamboat when Napoleon referred it to them," observes our Consul.

This reminds Vicentini of a picture of Napoleon at St. Helena. He is watching a steamboat on the horizon and smites his head, saying, "Si j'avais cru!" ("Had I only believed!").

Wadsworth comes in to the table immensely pleased. "The foundation builder was going to hold up our whole installation with his delays. The Presi-

dente came down himself to-day and cut away a mile of red tape. He has put the fear of God into the contractor. You ought to see the men working now. I think he said he'd hang somebody if the job was not done on time."

The Cuban friend of Mattey's is giving some lurid details of the United States intervention there. "Why, the whole trouble was started for five thousand dollars," he says; "I know, for I got some of it. Cuba had twenty million dollars in her treasury and the Yankees wanted that. They spent the money on roads, framing up deals with the contractors, and then they evacuated the country. It was all nonsense about the negroes or the Liberals stirring up the row.

"We did not fight a battle; just marched around and burned farmers' barns," he continues; "I had two hundred men, not over ten armed, and we wanted to pass

the Government post near Caballo. So I sent word to the captain that I was going to attack the town and ordered him to send away the women. He drew in his outposts and I was able to pass. It was a good joke on him. But that revolution was *una representación dramaticá*."

The Commandante of Bolivar, El Señor Coronel Pilar Para, invites you to go shooting with him along a lagoon across the river. Wood-pigeon are the objective. It is a real test of shooting to get these birds in the instant before they dive down into the brush. The difficulties of wing shooting, however, do not trouble El Señor Coronel. He sneaks up to a distance of about ten yards and lets them have it sitting. Then he turns around and grins, while a boy goes into the brush for the mangled remains. Twelve pigeons and two parrots are the bag before it gets too hot for comfort and we return.

At dinner that night Señor Vicentini

asks if you know a certain French paper. In a passing way, you allow.

"They are *blagueurs*," he says; "last month they showed a picture of the Calle Babilonia here in Bolivar with the rebels of Matos's revolution, and labelled it 'Mexican insurgents at Juarez.'"

"Did you ever hear of how Palazzi saved us from starvation in that Revolution?" asks M. Mattey.

"Was that Señor Santos Palazzi?" you ask.

"Si, si; Santos Palazzi, whom you know," says Señor Vicentini.

"Bien," continues M. Mattey; "the insurgents—Matos's men—had held this city for nearly two years. But after the big battle which Castro won, the Government troops came closer and closer in. They raided the country behind, where we got our provisions. They blockaded the river with their gunboats. Save a few who had depots, we could get no food except some

fish from the Orinoco or some mangoes from Marequita. Many were on the point of starvation."

"En effet c'était affreux," exclaims Señor Aquatella, who has been listening.

"It was at this time that Palazzi said he would bring food. Nobody believed him, for we knew that Castro was everywhere victorious. But Palazzi got a coriara, covered it over with green branches, and on a night when there was no moon started down stream with two peons.

"Only at night they paddled. In the day they hid in caños or under overhanging trees. At San Felix was the gunboat. They stole past close to the bank, like a shadow between the beams of the searchlight. It was to stand against a wall with a file of men in front if he were caught.

"After passing San Felix it was not so bad. He got down to the mouth of

the Orinoco and was picked up by an American cruiser—its name I forget; perhaps it was the 'Gloucester.' Any way, the American captain refused to permit us to be starved. He had the 'Apure loaded up with food and started with it to relieve us.

"At Los Castillos, the commander of the fort was going to fire on the 'Apure.' But the American captain trained his cannon and sent word that on the first shot he would blow the fort into little pieces. So Castro's men did not fire. And we got food."

"Et ça goûtait bien, parbleu!" adds Señor Vicentini.

The Presidente has sent a request for you to come at four o'clock to his house. A tall, very dark Venezuelan gentleman with a thin eagle nose and a full beard is there—Señor Ygnacio Alvarado. General Telleria introduces you. Then he announces the purport of his summons.

The City of Bolivar

The *señor* has been so good as to invite you to his estate at San José, so that you may see something of the interior of Guiana. He is leaving in a day or so. Would you like to go?

You are rather taken aback. The Presidente has manifestly issued to this grave *señor* a royal request that you be invited. Of course, however, you will be delighted to accept the kindness. It is not a chance to miss.

The Presidente asks about your outfit—a poncho, a mosquito bar, a hammock?

"Give me the pleasure of being allowed to attend to the equipment and to the provisions for the road," says Señor Alvarado in quiet dignity.

"How about a horse?" asks Telleria.

"Perhaps for the comfort of the trip a mule is better," says Alvarado. "I can get one from Montez."

"Good!" says General Telleria. Then he turns to you. "You are in the best

of hands with my friend," he says cordially. "You will meet Dr. Velazquez, a great hunter, one of the finest examples of an intelligent and educated estate owner. Have a good time and drop in to see me upon the return. Adios, hasta la vista!"

He shakes your hand warmly. Rather bewildered and decidedly conscience-stricken at being thus imposed upon the hospitality of his personal friends, you take your departure to make ready for the trip.

VI

ON THE LLANOS

SEÑOR ALVARADO accompanies you to the hotel to work out the expedition. He is the traditional Spanish gentleman, grave, dignified, soft-spoken, of punctilious courtesy. He explains in fuller detail the expedition which El Presidente has arranged. You are to go to his estate at San José, some seventy miles southward on the Garapo River, in the heart of the plains. There you will hunt and be shown the life of the Venezuelan ranch-owners. Food is to be carried packed on a burro for the stretches where no supplies are obtainable.

"But most of the people along the road are relatives of mine," adds Señor Alvarado.

He asks to see your equipment. The rubber poncho he condemns at once. It is too small, and you must have something warm. "I will get you a *covija*." Your mosquito net, on the other hand, has meshes which are too large.

"It must be very fine, like a lady's veil," he says. "It must fit well over the hammock. I will get the right sort." The hammock that you have acquired at Mannoni's he thinks will do.

"Everybody sleeps in hammocks out on the llanos," he remarks.

The mule is the next quest. We go down the Calle de Constitution to the Calle Babilonia and enter the general merchandise store of Guilelmo Montez. The proprietor is wedged in a corner behind a high desk. He has tobacco, canned goods, blankets, balatá, machetes, cheeses, everything that one can think of. He is round as a dumpling, tanned nearly to the black of a negro, and with

his broad smile looks like an ebony idol.

Yes, he has a "buen mula." It is in the courtyard behind, and we go out to look at it. A capuchin monkey on the veranda roof, chained by his middle, reaches for your hat as you pass, and a guinea-cock jumps to one side.

The mule is brought out and looks all right, save for a saddle gall, which you object to.

"No importa," says Señor Alvarado, shaking a long finger, "I will fix it. You try him."

A couple of black boys go to get the saddlery. It takes two of them to bring it. Really, it is appalling what is put on to that little beast. First comes a blanket, carefully folded so as to leave a depression along the spine. Then follows a piece of sacking with a hole cut in it over the sore. Next an oilskin, stuffed with straw on the under side, and

reinforced over the withers. Then a leather saddle-cloth with coloured patterns sewn in. Last, the big embroidered saddle with pockets and jingling rings on all sides. It is covered with some yellow upholstery which looks like a bath towel.

Alvarado smiles with pleasure as the latter is cinched tight.

"We will put the saddlebags one on each side, and strap the *covija* behind. The mosquito net you can sit on, and we will put a surcingle over it, which will make the riding softer."

You feel as if you were on a miniature Eiffel Tower as you mount. No wonder the mule looks discouraged. His poor thin neck and wabbly ears are far below you. With the ferocious curb loose, you take a turn around the block and come back. The saddle sore has not rubbed and the mule goes at a very comfortable gait.

Montez swears it is strong enough for

"BUEN MULA"

any trip, and Alvarado nods his head: "Buen mula!"

You return to the hotel and arrange to leave next day at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Some laundry work would be desirable, so the boy is called.

"Only a Chinaman can do him so quick," he says.

You summon the official head Celestial and put it to him. He thinks a moment, for half past three next day is a rush order in this land of *pasado mañana*. The Mongolian, however, here as everywhere in the world, is equal to profitable business. Finally, he agrees to deliver.

During your last dinner at Mannoni's you hear another discussion, regarding the time of the steamer run from Ciudad Bolivar to Cayenne. It varies from two to five days, according to Señor Aquatella and M. Vicentini respectively.

Wadsworth, too, gives you his last ad-

monitions regarding the Spanish language: "Make everything masculine, and don't bother about tenses and things. People will look surprised, but still they will understand."

You eat another of Mr. Henderson's mangoes, and go out into the court and smoke.

At four o'clock Señor Alvarado comes for you at Mannoni's. He is dressed in black and wears a wide brown plush sombrero and black leggings. Outside is a peon with his steed, and the "buen mula" for yourself. The Chinaman has kept his word. Presently you are ready, with some spare linen packed in a saddle-bag, your rifle in its sling, and binoculars handy. The hotel turns out to see you climb on to the lofty peaked saddle, towering above the mule, and start up the cobbled hill.

Along the steep road, bordered by the pale blue and yellow stucco houses with

their barred windows, in front of the white cathedral and the brooding statue of Bolivar, we go, the mules picking their way daintily among the cobble-stones. Through the Plaza Miranda on the top of the hill the hoofs clatter. We pass the Infantry Barracks, then take the steep slope, and draw in under the shadow of the old Spanish monastery, with its sentry-boxes on the wall. We skirt the cemetery of La Trinidad, leaving the ruined Spanish fort which guarded the height to our left.

"There Bolivar stood," says Alvarado, "just before he entered Angostura to be named President. There he chose the colours of the flag for Greater Colombia. It had been raining, and the sun came out over the city as El Libertador's force came onto the crest.

"'What better flag,' he exclaimed, 'can we have than the colour of the heavens with the rainbow aglow?' That is why

the nations that were made from his great Republic have such bright colours on their banners."

We enter a road leading between suburban country houses. One cottage has over its door the name "San Buenaventura."

A peon here salutes our host. He reins in his mule for a moment, and each man puts his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Buenos dias, amigo," says Alvarado.

Three or four other friends come up while we stand and are greeted in this way. Alvarado knows a good half of the people in the streets as we pass along, and for each one, high or low, he has this affectionate salutation.

The road broadens out presently into a succession of trails with grass between, and we pass woods and thickets of middle-sized trees. After about two hours of riding we meet a band of peons, whom Alvarado hails and from whom

he asks a question regarding Dr. Sarto. One of them turns back and takes down the bars of a gate a few hundred yards ahead. We enter grounds with small mango-trees and cedars planted here and there, a neat row of stones circling each trunk.

In front is a long, low stucco building whose roof-thatch covers a veranda which runs completely around it.

"A nephew of mine, Dr. Sarto, lives here," says Alvarado.

We hand our mules over to some boys who run to our service and enter the gallery. Two ladies come out to meet us. For a moment one suspects that they have just risen from a surprised siesta and have been caught in rather disordered *robes-de-nuit*, for they are dressed in shapeless loose white frocks. But this proves to be the regular house-dress of the wives and sisters of country estate owners.

The ladies conduct us to the end of the veranda, which is the reception-room of the house. Canvas, reefed like the sail of a ship, is stretched under the thatch, ready to be let down in case of rain. The walls of the house are of adobe, whose paint, once white, is much flaked away and is scarred with nail-holes. Two faded engravings hang on the side wall, and these, with a table and some rocking-chairs, painted black, constitute the furnishings.

This family is one of the comfortable bourgeoisie of Ciudad Bolivar. Dr. Sarto owns a pharmacy, and rides out home after a few hours in town each day. He is a physician, and while speaking Spanish only, he reads French medical books without difficulty.

His wife, who has refined features and a pleasant address, speaks the remnants of French and English. She once had a fair knowledge of both languages, but long iso-

lation from the world and its interests has buried it and her other possibilities. Her five children are sturdy-looking and well cared for, but Madame Sarto is sallow, careworn, and ailing.

The Doctor himself comes home presently on mule-back. He is a well-built, strong-looking man of about forty, more of the German than the Spanish type. He takes us for a stroll around the gardens while dinner is being prepared.

In a corral made of crooked posts from the chapparal-trees there are half a dozen rather skinny-looking cows. Farther on is a little plantation which the Doctor has started, with a couple of tentative irrigation ditches. The yuma-tree, from whose roots cassava is made, bananas, bread-fruits, and other plants are growing. A cashew-tree, whose fruit is edible though not very good, but whose nut, growing outside the fruit, is really excellent, is flourishing behind the house. The

children run ahead of us with sticks to knock off mangoes.

Just at nightfall we sit down on the veranda to eat *la comida.* Boiled beef with rice is the *pièce de résistance,* a sort of Yorkshire pudding, made of plantains, eggs, and milk, accompanying the meat. Wine and beer are on the table, and are liberally taken. A crowd of little negro children and women dependents of the house, who hover habitually about the kitchen and the servants' quarters, pass the plates and serve the repast. One expects every minute to see them fall over each other and make a general cataclysm, but they graze adventures and deliver the viands safely.

The dinner scene is suddenly enlivened by a shriek from one of these boys, who has just missed stepping on a scorpion with his bare feet. We get up and kill the insect by stamping on it with boots, then go back to some excellent

preserves called "papoi," served with a white cheese which flakes away like an onion—"quesa a manos," it is called.

We retire after dinner to the other end of the veranda for coffee and cigarettes. Dr. Sarto lights an acetylene lamp, and we puff a few minutes in silence. Outside the moon rises slowly, and you settle for an evening of quiet comfort. But Alvarado does not give us much indulgence.

"This is just the time to travel," he says; "the mules go best by night."

So the mules are brought around and we take leave of the Doctor's household. Two peons on horseback join us now. They drive before them a little burro with a box of provisions slung on each side of his back. To the tail of one peon's horse is moored a spare mule. The burro runs free, and when the front rider has nothing better to do he gives the animal a slash with his whip. We go out of the gate and into the night.

A good moon is shining, but the sky is so overcast that one can barely see the path ahead. Alvarado goes on, however, without hesitation. The forest has thinned, and we follow now an irregular road, now cattle-paths, riding in Indian file. Twice Alvarado deserts these trails altogether, and for a mile or so cuts across a wide savanna of bunch grass, where shadowy cattle, stunted bushes, and chaparal-trees appear from time to time in the wide expanse of grass.

Two labouring ox-teams of six yoke are passed, drawing a high cart with wheels set 7 feet apart. Peons walking alongside are goading on the unwilling cattle.

After about three hours of silent riding the dim outlines of a house and a corral loom ahead. We ride up and dismount. The peons unload the animals and go off to picket them where they can graze. We enter without ceremony a large dim

PRIMITIVE TRANSPORTATION

room and sling our hammocks from the beams which support the roof.

"No mosquitoes here," says Alvarado; "do not get out your net."

None of the inhabitants of the house stir. After removing gaiters, shoes, and coat, you take wearily to the hammock. Towards morning you open one eye and reach for the woollen *covija*. It is actually chilly. Soon, however, you are awake for good, though the sun has just risen. Cocks are crowing, parrots screeching, cows lowing somewhere outside, and people moving about and talking. You look around and finally get up.

You are in a big room with the thatch of the roof rising to an acute angle above your head. At the doorway this is cut away like a bang on a child's forehead, but along the rest of its length the roofing comes down shaggily to within about 5 feet of the ground. The stalks of the palms used in thatching are laid in regular

ranks over beams and are held together with fibres. Not a nail is used. The sapling lattice framework forming the sides of this big central room leave it open to every breath of air. The kitchen, at one end, is enclosed up to 2 feet under the roof with wattle and thatch, and the owner's bedroom at the end of the *casa* opposite the kitchen is completely enclosed in the same way. The floors are of clay, stamped hard and irregularly laid, giving miniature mountains and valleys—an ideal battle-field for a child's lead soldiers.

Of furniture, there are in the centre room only a table and a chair, hammocks in the bedroom, in the kitchen a few pots, a wooden trough, and a coffee-can. On the walls of the living-room a couple of muzzle-loading guns, a machete, and some old saddlery complete the inventory.

The owner, Pedro Cristine Praga, of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, is a typical small proprietor. He is slenderly

built, with a heavy moustache and side whiskers. His wife is much older-looking and shows the wear of work. His daughter, about seventeen, is quite comely, with great dark eyes. So are also the two half-grown boys and the two little "muchachos," Juan and Anastasia.

The women shuffle about in their sandals—*alpargatas*—preparing breakfast. Coffee is made by pouring hot water several times through a coffee-bag. Some cheese and cassava bread are laid out for us. Fried eggs and milk fresh from the cow complete the repast. After breakfast the girl goes to a bunch of dried tobacco leaves in a corner, rolls herself a cigar, and lights up. You get her to make you one also. It is shaped like a diseased cheroot, but is not bad to smoke.

After a short stay the animals are brought up and we mount and go on,

so as to travel as much as possible while it is still cool. We are on a fairly elevated plateau now, seared by precipitous gullies, whose coarsely sanded sides are dark red. Down in these *arroyos* the thickets grow together into a jungle of trees, creepers, bamboo, and cactus. The water brings dense vegetation all along its path, while on the flat sandy plateau nothing is met for long distances save bunch grass and the gnarled chapparal-trees.

Through this we travel mile after mile, following dubious-looking paths among the bunch grass. The red sandstone formation and sharp peaks and gullies give place to occasional ledges of granite, strewn with boulders, thickets growing up at times around the rocks. The grass is very coarse and tufted. The cattle we sometimes pass are thin and small. Towards noon the heat has become intense.

"Hace mucho calor," you gasp.

"We are near the place for a halt," says Alvarado consolingly.

The peons lash the burro along behind us, and the mules need to be encouraged with the barbed *espuelas* every few feet. At last a brown adobe house, with a small banana plantation behind, appears out in the bare llanos. We ride up, slide off our mules, and walk into the centre room, while the peons unload the animals and bring in the provisions.

This house is built on the same plan as that of the peasant proprietor of last night, save that the open lattice-work is plastered over with adobe and everything is shut in and correspondingly dark and stuffy. We are welcomed by a little old crinkly-haired Zambo woman wearing smoked spectacles and nearly blind. Alvarado greets her with his usual courtesy and guides her to the kitchen, where she and another woman

prepare coffee. About half an hour later lunch is ready. It consists of a big meat stew, in which plantains, a yellow vegetable with a green skin like a frog's, a white fibrous vegetable looking like a potato, and some rice swim round together. Cheese, more coffee, and some of our preserved milk round out this repast—*el almuerzo.*

Chickens in numbers are running about underfoot, including one curious breed called "grifo," the black feathers of which stick out at right angles. There is also a sort of white bird, like a pullet, but longer and thinner, and a big-headed sun-bittern which catches and eats flies.

We hang up our hammocks and prepare to sit under cover until the sun is lower, for it is now torrid outside, and hot even under the cover of the house. Alvarado stretches himself out comfortably and talks.

"This road to San José is safe enough,"

he says; "here all are friends and relations, for our family and the Perez and the Velazquez have been on the land for centuries, but beyond, in Paragua, it is bad—*un pais malo.* Once I went far into Paragua to look at some balatá forests. The place had a bad name, but I knew of the wealth people get with balatá. A man who had been there offered to guide me—an Indian with a big machete-scar. Nobody in San José knew him, but I hired him, got the mules, and started. We travelled for two weeks. Then one day we stopped at a little *rancho* to eat. I noticed that the guide said something secretly to the man of the house, whose looks I did not like.

"A little farther on I saw my Indian looking to right and left and touching his hat with his hand. We were going through a very thick forest, and I became suspicious in an instant. I drew my revolver and aimed at him.

"'Call your friend who is in those bushes,' I said.

"He called 'Ramon,' and the man came out with a lasso in his hand. I aimed the revolver, and told my Indian to tie him to a tree.

"Their scheme was to lasso me and rob, and probably kill me. Many travellers had disappeared in Paragua. But I was in a bad position, for I did not know the way, and the nearest town was 40 miles. So I rode with the guide in front of me and the pistol at his back for 30 miles. Then I could see the road. I tied him to a tree with many knots and rode on quickly.

"The Jefe Civil was in the town, and he sent and got the Indian. He confessed he had meant to rob me, and they found that he had murdered other travellers. So they shot him and his partner. It was a close escape. But here it is all right, save in time of

revolution, when thieves and soldiers are all about."

We slap at the flies and wait for the heat to diminish. About four o'clock the mules are brought out and we start off once again. It is still chokingly hot, and the miles of savanna spread out unbrokenly in the glare. Now and then granite rocks and thickets are passed, and far ahead a mountain range, the Parida, is dimly outlined.

A few birds are flying among the rare chapparal. On one bush is perched an *oripopa*, a sort of small vulture, so tame that we pass it 30 feet away, and an occasional *zamuro*, or turkey-buzzard, wheels in the sun far overhead.

Clouds of the purest white, in great rolls like mountains of billowy cotton, are heaped in the pale blue of the sky. Some are distant, some seem so close that one could almost touch them. The sun sinks lower and lower. It tinges now the

under side of the clouds, and flushes to deepest crimson the whole mass along the western horizon. On the east a thunder-storm is brewing, and the clouds are iron-grey. Now, in paler reflex, the splendour of the west steals over them too. The far-off shower shows like a broad band of rose, while north and south the clouds every moment become darker. A few minutes longer the glory of the sunset lasts. Then almost at once, like a curtain, falls the night.

With the last light of the dying day we ford a river bordered by great dark-green trees and palms, skirt a banana plantation, pass a chapparal-trunk corral and enter the grounds of Señor Bermudez, a cousin of Alvarado.

Señor Bermudez, driven out by an early Venezuelan revolution, was for many years a resident of Trinidad. But there he met business reverses, so he has recently returned and bought this estate. The

señor and his wife welcome us to a home which is a duplicate of Dr. Sarto's, save that it is more poorly equipped. The peasant's rough plenty of yesterday is absent here. Life is evidently a hard struggle for the old man and his wife and two grown daughters. He has, however, the tradition of Spanish hospitality, and offers his best entertainment and a corner of the porch for the hammocks.

Señor Bermudez has a sample of tobacco from a valley some distance to the westwards which he believes to be as good as the best Cuban. It takes more of an expert than you are to pass judgment.

"I had some cigars made," he recounts, "and got a Partagas band put around them. I gave a box to Señor Antonella, who is one of the gourmets of Port of Spain, and he said they were particularly good cigars. He was very angry when we told him they came from Venezuela,

but he had to allow they were fine smoking."

We are lit in to dinner by a single flickering candle. The poor light throws on to the dark walls shadows of gigantic gestures and heads with enormous features. It is weirdly fascinating. From time to time, when some one turning a little presents his profile to the trembling yellow flame, a huge hand lifts something like a pronged pitchfork up to a mouth which opens like the gullet of a monster. It is an eerie dinner, and, as we have been many hours in the saddle, you soon accept the hospitality of the rafters.

You sleep, however, with a certain difficulty. Two geese, early in the night, come to roost on the rail near your head, and hiss to the world in general before finally retiring. A pig makes an investigation of your shoes. Sundry chickens, which should have roosted long ago, come in clucking anxiously. Cocks crow to

the moon and the stars all through the night. An uneasy cow in the corral near by utters a periodic "moo."

At dawn you are definitely awakened by Alvarado. You find everything packed but your hammock. One of Señor Bermudez's daughters has a cup of black coffee ready, and you are very soon in the saddle.

"Adios, señor," the ladies call to you. Alvarado and Señor Bermudez touch hands to shoulders and our cavalcade starts.

"We will breakfast at San José," says Alvarado.

The llanos become more rolling as we advance and the rocky thickets more numerous. The grass seems better. It is dense, and in some places it has lost its clumpy character and is all one swaying sward, "como un mar de yarbas," like Humboldt's "sea of grass." We pass many little watercourses, whose presence

can be discovered a long way off by the palm-trees which follow them down. An occasional lagoon is seen. We skirt one whose soft border is churned by the cattle into a bumpy morass. A solitary white crane is standing sentry over it. A palm glade is left behind and a boulder-covered hill-slope. The Parida Mountain Range is nearing us ahead.

"This is my land," says Alvarado, and his eyes light with the pleasure of a home-coming.

We ride a couple of miles farther to where the trail divides. The peons and the burro are behind. Alvarado dismounts and lays twigs from a chapparal-tree across one of the trails.

"Thus the peons will know which path to take," he explains.

A half hour farther on we descend into a hollow and reach a cattle-pond with lofty trees around it. Beyond, we climb back onto the upland.

"Nearly there," calls our host eagerly.

A barbed-wire fence appears presently, and this we skirt for another mile. Then a clump of big dark-green mango-trees arises, and a chapparal-wood corral, and a long, low, thatched house. A boy runs forward and lets down the bars and we ride in.

A strong-looking, much-tanned youth of about eighteen comes up and affectionately salutes Alvarado.

"My son Carlos," he is introduced. We walk up to the entrance of the portico. Two ladies with sallow waxen complexions in the now familiar white shapeless dresses appear from inside. One is Señora Alvarado, the other an orphan girl whom they have taken into the family without any bond of relationship or obligation. Carlos tells you that he has spent two years at school in Trinidad. He speaks some English. The rest of the family know only Spanish.

While breakfast is being prepared Alvarado gets out the gifts which he has bought in Bolivar for his family. There are boxes of scented soap for Señora Alvarado, a brooch for the girl, a pair of knitted blue socks for the two-year-old baby, a tin trumpet for the six-year-old muchacha, and a new necktie for Carlos. The recipients are all delighted, and everything is spread out on the table.

The *almuerzo* comes on in due time—coffee with fresh milk, fried eggs, and cassava bread. You are not deficient in appetite nor are you averse to a siesta, in the heat of the day, after breakfast. The hammocks are hung on the porch.

Lying in them lazily, you can follow the parrots screaming in the mango-tree overhead. Half a dozen vultures are perched on the stockade of the corral, watching a sick calf with sinister patience. A peacock, with much whirring of plumes,

is displaying his charms to an absolutely indifferent white pullet, while the neglected pea-hen, with one fledgling, is quietly picking up a living for the family in another portion of the garden. Down by the kitchen to the left a sow, followed by half a dozen pink pigs, is rooting beneath a lime-tree. A flock of blackbirds wheels in the sky and passes. Guinea-fowl and chickens wander up and down the piazza. A tiger-dog comes and pokes his nose into your hand. A white turkey gobbles in emulation of the peacock.

On the adobe railing in front of you is a row of saddles, while bridles, surcingles and straps are hanging on the posts. The wall behind is pasted up with advertising lithographs of girls' heads, amid which is a cartoon of a man who sold on credit when he should have sold for cash. A religious calendar, giving the names of the Saints to whom each day in the year is sacred, occupies a promi-

nent place, and chromos of the Venezuelan Presidents "dado" the gallery. Close beside the hammock are slung big gourds that hold a reserve of drinking-water and a porous jug which, being always damp, keeps cold a supply for immediate requirements. Just under the thatch are suspended the skulls of eleven jaguars shot in the neighbourhood of the ranch.

At about the end of the siesta a well-set-up figure in white rides up to the yard gate. He is welcomed by the family and introduced to you—Dr. Eduardo Velazquez, the *señor* to whom the Presidente has given you a note.

The Doctor is about thirty years old, and is tanned a dark brown by constant riding in the torrid sun. A heavy moustache covers strong white teeth; his air is alert and keen. He has studied medicine for two years in Paris, but on the death of his father last year came out to manage the family estates. He is a

nephew of Alvarado, and, owing in a large measure to his business capacity, has assumed the management of his ranch also. He receives by the hand of friends passing from Bolivar the French medical journals and the Caracas "Heraldo." Medicine he practises to some extent still, but mostly on the farm animals, which assuredly need it.

We go out to look at a small herd of horses that his peons have driven in from the savanna. Carlos brings along a bottle of some brown creosote tincture. Horse after horse has to be treated in the ears and groin for "garrapata," little ticks which fatten on blood, swell to a full quarter of an inch or more, and burst, distributing a numberless progeny which have grown within their body. A colt has some bone disease that prevents it from rising to its feet. One mare has a cancer which the Doctor has unsuccessfully operated upon. Others have raw sores

here and there. Truly the cattleman's life in Venezuela is not easy.

The River Carapo is a mile away from the house. A swim is suggested by Carlos. Our steeds are saddled and brought around, and we ride down to a gap in the thickets which line the river, where a gravel beach stretches just below a deep pool.

"There are no crocodiles here, but sometimes we get electric eels," you are told.

The sport is so refreshing that the afternoon passes all too soon.

As the shadows are lengthening, you ride back to the house among the mango-trees, as cool and comfortable as if you were on the plains of the Dakotas rather than nine degrees north of the Equator. Indeed, it would seem that the heat of the Tropics is by no means the terror it is pictured. Unless one is in a hot and stuffy room, or on a pitch lake, or in a city where the buildings absorb heat, he is

comfortable everywhere save under the direct rays of the sun. And at no time do you find it worse than some of the bad days in New York. The Torrid differs from the Temperate Zone not so much in having a greater extreme of heat, as in having warm weather all the year round. The nights are cool, and here at San José the woollen *covija* is needed always before morning.

The household at Alvarado's rises at dawn. The milking of the cows is the first duty. A chorus comes from them and their calves in the mists of the early day. The sound is like the groaning of a great suffering host.

"Comme le champs de bataille de Wagram, dans la dernière acte de l'Aiglon," Velazquez expresses it. The calves are kept in one pen, the cows in another. As each cow's turn comes to be milked her calf is let join her for a moment, then it is pulled away by main strength and held

until the milking is accomplished. These animals are the descendants of the cattle brought over by the Spaniards at the time of the Conquest. Almost no new blood has been brought in since, and as no care has been taken in breeding, here, where the grass is not particularly good, the cows are rangy and thin, and give but little milk.

A wild bull is to be slaughtered in your honour for fresh meat. Early in the morning, after he has been driven near the house and cornered, a peon has ridden up with the raw-hide lasso fast to the horse's tail and has caught the victim. He stands now lashed to a tree by the many turns of the raw hide around his horns. A savage look is in his eyes.

At about ten o'clock a keen-eyed, leather-skinned vaquero lassos the bull's front feet and throws him. Then Dr. Velazquez with one dexterous stab cuts an artery in the throat. The ill-omened

buzzards sit in the trees around and coldly wait. Without staining his white suit the Doctor flays the head and one leg, then leaves the rest to the vaquero and a young Indian. The ribs are slashed away and roasted on the end of a spit over a slow fire for our dinner. The rest of the flesh is cut into strips a half-inch thick and hung on a rack to cure in the hot sun. This makes the tough desiccated beef one gets throughout this country.

Everything we eat at San José is raised on the ranch or near by—coffee, sugar, cassava bread, milk, meat, beans, mangoes, papoi, bananas, plantains, tobacco. It is wonderful what a small area of ground will supply an abundance of food. According to Von Humboldt, one acre of bananas will feed twenty times as many as will an acre of wheat, and bananas go on bearing year after year without cultivation.

Nature here is very close at hand. Every morning you shake out your shoes

lest a scorpion has nested there. Once you find beside them a poisonous lizard, *largaraba.* The domestic animals are under your very feet. Bats fly around in the house and hang from the thatch. Rats run about under the end room where the stores of rice and beans and the Doctor's medicine chests are kept. Parrots and blackbirds swarm in the trees outside, and here nest the little birds that give warning of serpents.

Near the house is a hill of those strangely civilized communities, the parasol ants. For 200 feet you trace their line of march, one rank going to the nest carrying fragments of leaves, which fall back over their bodies as if the creatures were shading themselves from the sun. These colonies have been compared to Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," or to the ideal socialism. All work in the hill-hive—the big ants, nearly half an inch long, provided with formidable jaws, and

the little ones, no bigger than gnats. Each carries the burden it can bear. All are nourished by the fungus which grows upon the masticated leaves planted inside the nest. But the individual is nothing. The wounded ones are let struggle where they lie, the procession going on past and over them indifferently. Toil, not life, is the goal of the hill-hive, and the toil never stops.

A hunting-party is arranged to start in the afternoon of the second day and camp near a group of hills on the edge of the savanna. Two ancient Winchesters are at the *casa*, and Velazquez has a 38-calibre revolver. A machete for the peon who will accompany us completes the outfit.

We ride off to the eastward with a pack of seven "peros tigreros" trotting behind. Nominally these dogs are for hunting jaguar. Actually, they will chase nearly anything. An hour before we start they

kill at the foot of the banana plantation a rabbit, which is promptly consigned to the family larder.

The pack is a curiously mixed one; three dogs are of the true "tigrero" type, brindled grey with slanting eyes. But the best dog is a black, El Negro, with no class at all in his looks and one ear chewed off. There are two white and grey "pintos" and one brown brute, small and long like a dachshund, with hanging bloodhound ears. The pintos are just puppies, and ever and anon they get stuck on thorns and make the forest ring with their woes.

About two hours of riding from the *casa* brings us to a grove of chapparal at the foot of a rocky thicket-grown hill. A pool of water girded with palm-trees is alongside. We decide to camp here. The mules are picketed in some good grazing ground. While the peon gathers wood for a fire, including a reserve supply,

which he carefully covers with palm fronds against a rain which seems imminent, we stretch our hammocks between the trees. The mosquito bar, which has not been unfolded so far, is now opened out and drawn into place. As a protection against the shower, a rope is stretched above the net, and over this is laid the thick *covija*, which makes a miniature tent over the hammock.

There is no danger from jaguar in the night, surrounded as we are by dogs and with the fire burning. But there is a chance that a bull may come along the cattle-path and give your hammock a poke for good luck. This is one of the risks, however.

Having fished up water by means of a horn at the end of a string, an equipment which both Velazquez and the peon carry in their saddle pockets, we soon make a meal of coffee, cassava, and cheese. The coffee-grounds are later allowed to drain

for an hour or so, and just before going to bed we have the second brew, called *guarapo*. The original brew was *café*.

It is a warm, moist night, whose deep encircling shadows seem full of murmurings and of whispers. Between the high trees above are spaces of dense blackness. An odour of earth, of grasses, a scent of woods and of dead branches, is in the air. Above are the fitful stars, and though no breeze stirs, you feel around you the vague palpitation of this ocean of leaves. You feel lost, at bay, surrounded with dangers under this living mystery a-tremble everywhere. You fall asleep to this deep throb of the jungle.

In the morning we discuss the plan of campaign. "Venedo ò tigre—deer or jaguar?" is the first question. All votes are counted for jaguar.

"Now," says Velazquez, "there are two ways of hunting *tigre*. One is safe and easy, but it is hard to find him by it.

The other is very difficult and dangerous, but if there are any *tigres* you get them. The first method is to ride around the savanna with dogs and try to run on a trail. The dogs chase the *tigre* up a tree, and you station yourself about 10 feet away and shoot it in the eye. The second way is to go into the *montaña* to their dens. If jaguars are in the neighbourhood they will be there. You build a fire and stand in front of the hole. They come out on the jump and you have to shoot quick. "*Esta los llanos*"—he points to the level savanna, "*y esa el monte*," he points to the jungle-covered hill above.

We enter the *montaña*. The peon, machete in hand, leads the way to cut the vines and creepers where they are impassable. In a few minutes you are fighting your way up the hill through the worst jungle you have ever had to face, bar none.

The Venezuelans have a special word for these tangled forests of trees and creepers, "los bejucales." Here and there are trees with long needles like thorns which break off in the flesh. On the climb you grasp branches whose upper surface is fitted with row on row of jagged triangular teeth like a shark's, so that even a monkey cannot climb them. Sabre cacti, with hook-shaped thorns along the edge and a fine point, grapple and pierce your clothes. Others which you brush into are four-sided, standing upright with sprays of needles at the angles. On the rocks grow still others like gigantic thistles, white on top with a little red flower. Vines sweep down from the tree-tops and overhanging rocks. They are so many entangling ropes with which you struggle like some labouring Gulliver while tearing your hands upon the fish-hook and thorn attachments. Clumps of young bamboo add their stubborn

spines to the rest. You set your teeth hard, breast the savage resistance, and press forward.

Boulders line the way; between them you must pick a precarious way as best you can. Now and again your feet stub against a rock, and being entangled, you fall forward, clutching desperately at all in reach. In places the ground is so steep that you must climb on hands and knees. The dogs will not stir from the path you make to hunt these thickets, but follow cringing, with bleeding paws, whining as the thorns pierce them. Once, fortunately in a more open place, the guide gives a cry and runs a score of yards. Before you can understand the reason, four hornets have stung you on forehead and temple. A *cascabel* (rattlesnake) is sighted by the peon, but disappears quickly into the brush. Woodticks, (*garrapatas*) are on your arms and neck, burrowing in. The sweat pours down

your forehead, and the thick khaki of your suit is drenched with it.

At last we see a cavern under a great rock. "Tigre," whispers the peon. Guns ready, we tiptoe up. The peon pokes tenderly with a long stick. We are braced to receive a jaguar coming out at a spring. Our emotion is wasted, however. The dogs come and sniff: nothing is in the den.

We move along the base of the cliff, poking into all the dens we find. It is heart-breaking work. The peon is fearlessly brave—"guapo." He goes up to every hole and pokes in it with a stick, as well as leading the way through the brush. He is a silent, thin-faced, sinewy vaquero, of the cowboy breed with whom Bolivar beat the Spaniards. We accomplish nothing. We poke into holes for two days, riding across the savanna from mountain to mountain. Several turtles with orange spots on their backs,

called *morocoi*, and an armadillo, called *caracol*, are all we get.

Once we see the *zamuro* wheeling about in the distance, and ride a couple of miles to see if a jaguar has killed something there. A hundred buzzards, black, repulsive, are around a cow. We examine her, but there is not a wound. Her eyes only have been pecked out as the first tit-bits by a white and black royal vulture, on whose pleasure the rest wait.

"Une veille vache morte d'amour," says Velazquez disgustedly.

The peon cuts a piece of the cow's leg for the dogs, which shamelessly gnaw the flesh, for with raw meat they are fed without scruple.

The vaquero decides finally that the *tigres* must be in the deep woods, rather than here in the neighbourhood of the cattle-ranges which they usually haunt.

On the third day out we camp for lunch, in the midst of which a rain comes on.

For two hours it pours in torrents. Everything we have is wet through. A gourd which was left standing to catch the coffee drippings is full to the brim. The dogs whimper and move uneasily from place to place. El Negro, knowing that his hunting ability entitles him to special privilege, comes and curls up with us under a dripping *covija*.

The afternoon sun dries us out. We sight a herd of deer in a thicket and bag two. Then the dogs start something which we run down and find to be an ant-bear. It has taken to the limb of a little tree. It is striking at El Negro with its curved claws, and is hissing so virulently with its ridiculously small mouth, shaped like a horse's, that the dogs do not dare go near it. We add it to our bag.

Farther on, just as we have picked our way across the boulder-strewn bed of a branch of the Carapo, the dogs start a

fox, and are off in full cry back across the river. There is a beautiful burst for a mile or more, in which the fox doubles back and is killed a hundred yards from where he started. El Negro is first at the death, and we keep the tail in souvenir.

We take a trip to the land of "The Lame Señor," and add a grey-eyed, red-moustached mestizo and a piratical-looking Indian, with a great hooked machete, to the guides force, bagging another deer on this land. We sleep on the *señor's* porch while the Indian strums his guitar and the mestizo improvises to the rattle of the *maracas* gourds a song about a mighty hunting.

At length, after a week of it, we turn our mules back towards San José, and come trailing in about dusk, the mules spent with fatigue and the dogs straggling home in single file behind us.

After a good night's rest we are ready

for the next interest. Dr. Velazquez goes with you to the woods by the river, to point out some medicinal plants that are in local repute. On the way he points out the *arestin*, that curious sensitive-plant whose leaves close as one touches it.

After some scrambling along the valley bottom he points out the Cruseta real, a tree with light-brown bark, an infusion of which has the same effect as quinine. In Venezuela they gather the bark, boil it, and swallow 40 drops of the liquid per day. Many people who cannot take quinine, which makes them spotted, use this Cruseta real for fever. Dr. Velazquez believes that the tree is not the *Bonplandia trifoliata*, brewed by the old monks of Angostura, which Von Humboldt noted in 1799 as being good for fever, but another and unknown species.

The *mora*, which is like the balatá, gives, when its bark is tapped, a milk which is antiseptic and good for ulcers. This is

applied externally, sometimes diluted with water.

The *yagrumo* root is soaked in water and drunk. For hemorrhages the bark is scraped and put onto the wound.

The courtesy of the Alvarado household is exquisite. They notice that you like the fresh milk, and without a word of comment, despite the small quantity secured from the reluctant cows, two glasses are at your place every meal. Señora Alvarado sends a peon to a neighbour 10 miles away to get a loaf of a creamy sugar, like maple sugar, called *alfondoque*, for you to sample. Carlos sees that your heavy riding-boots are uncomfortable for use around the house, and gets you a pair of light *alpargatas*. Everybody in the family joins in to help polish up your raw and meagre Spanish.

Having spent ten days at San José, you plan now to return to Bolivar. You square up indebtedness as well as may be by giving Velazquez a pair of binoculars,

Alvarado a watch, and Carlos a camera and the muchacha a silver penknife. Your hosts supply you with provisions, delegate a peon as escort, and with affectionate farewells start you on your outward way.

Four days, after some detours and halts for shooting, bring you nearly to Bolivar. A six hours' forced night-march enables you to reach Mannoni's in time to take a shower-bath and sit down to breakfast with the rest.

"No, I believe that freemasonry is anti-Christian," M. Mattey is saying as you enter.

"On the contrary, it is of the greatest possible benefit to society at large," retorts M. Vicentini.

VII

THE "DELTA"

THE "Delta" is scheduled to sail for Port of Spain in five days. There may be a delay, because the "Apure" has got stuck on a sandbank near Pedernales, and if her signals are seen, the "Delta" must steam over and pull her off.

You go around and make your farewells to the Presidente, giving him a Thermos bottle to keep his coffee hot overnight and receiving a photograph in remembrance. You take leave of Santos Palazzi, getting presented with a tiger-dog and a jaguar skin, and leaving your rifle as a partial reciprocation. Dr. Sartos gives you a *covija*. It is

really embarrassing to know how to get square with all these kindly people.

You go down with Wadsworth to see how his engine has progressed. Everything is ready for the assembling, and the work will be done on schedule time. Wadsworth is pleased as Punch, and turns over the engines to show you how well they function. The Commandante goes for another dove-hunt with you, and this time some cranes and a young alligator are added to the bag.

You prepare for departure by getting out custom papers, or rather Santos Palazzi gets them out for you and General Navarro rushes them through. The papers are a relic of the time when almost everything paid an export duty, as gold still does. There comes at the last a hitch, or at least a halt, in getting the baggage on board the boat, because the "Delta," just when the

passengers are expecting to have their possessions embarked, goes over to Soledad to load cattle and returns only an hour before sailing-time. Charlie, whom Fitzgerald has left here with his launch, mounts guard lest the boat slip off without one passenger or his luggage.

At length the "Delta" reappears from across the river and toots her whistle. Most of the townsfolk have come to watch her off. They stream down across the naked earthen bank of the river to the water-line. Friends are out in force to speed the parting guests. M. Mattey is escorting his Cuban confrère, who leaves by this boat. Señor Aquatella has a large shipment of balatá. The American Consul is anxious to get some cigars sent up from Trinidad, and has to commission the Scotch engineer to bring them for him.

The gang-plank is soon thrown across, and porters in a line, like para-

sol ants, are passing in with bundles and trunks on heads, and coming out at the low entrance below-stairs. *Covijas* and saddlebags, owned by the swarthy Venezuelans bound for San Felix are heaped in one corner of the deck. Cedar chests, palm-fibre baskets, and bundles of many kinds are on their way 'tween decks, where a large family of Trinidad negroes have camped. Five porters carry the cumbersome equipment of the English tourist—saddle, top-hat-case and all—to the cabin indicated by the buxom Trinidad negress who is stewardess, and seems to manage all the men.

The deck is a hubbub of porters and passengers of every shade and complexion. Some are embracing each other. Some are talking excitedly. More are looking on stolidly. A crowd are opening champagne at the ship's bar in honour of a German merchant who is retiring for

good and leaving Venezuela—one Herr Müller. An American who has been up country getting hold of a balatá property, and has various shadowy concessions of problematical worth which he is taking to New York to realize upon, smokes a big Havana in company with a swarthy cattle-rancher from the llanos near Apure. The dark-skinned Jefe Civil of San Felix, Señor Pablo Garcia, is on the deck, standing stiffly up and ceremoniously saluting his friends, while beside him his private secretary, in civilian clothes and pointed yellow shoes, sabre on thigh and Winchester in hand, listlessly smokes a *cigarillo*.

A warning toot and the shore-bound element makes precipitate descent to the gang-plank. They stand upon the dock and begin the hand and handkerchief waving sacred to all boat-leaving. A third whistle and the vessel starts on the wide sweep which will face it down

stream. The German band on shore plays wheezingly "Gloria al Pueblo Venezolano," and with the white flannels still waving us their "bon voyage," we start down with the current, the City of Bolivar dropping farther and farther behind, its cathedral and the old Spanish fort fading last from our lingering vision.

The English tourist is first to break the retrospective charm. He is grumbling his troubles into the ear of a fellow-countryman who has been manager for an English syndicate interested in a mining concession near Callao.

"Do you know what I had to do to get out of this beastly country with my luggage? I had to buy a stamped piece of paper at the Custom House, cost 50 centimes. The inventory had to be made out in a certain form, they told me, but no form was printed on the stamped paper. A young chap at the Custom House said he would make out my list for

5 bolivars. But I wouldn't pay such a sum, so I went back to the hotel and had the schedule made out there. Then I had to go to a hat-store which had the stamp-selling concession and buy a one-bolivar stamp. I took this to the Custom House, and one man pressed a rubber marker on the paper and another signed it. I knew intuitively that the stamp should have been cancelled and I pointed this out. The second official said I was right, they had happened to miss it. He opened a penknife and stabbed the stamp. Then I took the document to still another place, and the Commandante stamped it anew and wrote his name upon it."

In one corner of the deck the Jefe Civil is talking to the Commandante of San Felix, the jovial banjo-player who went on the excursion with you to the Falls of the Caroni. They are discussing a murder which has taken place recently near their bailiwick. It was all on

account of a stolen pig. A small farmer had some goats lifted and went to law about the matter, but the thief had been acquitted. When, subsequently, a pig also disappeared, he took the law into his own hands, and on the report of his little daughter, loaded his shotgun with a couple of slugs, lay in wait for his enemy, and killed him.

"Too many thieves go unpunished," says the Commandante. "I think the man should be let off."

The Jefe Civil, who will be the judge unless overruled by the Presidente at Bolivar, is discreetly silent.

"It was curious how I captured that murderer," says the Commandante. "My mule smelled the dead man's blood as I passed the body, and next day, seeing the farmer go into the bushes, rather than come up and speak to me as I went by, raised my suspicion. I noticed it was near where the body was found."

The "Delta"

The forest is waving beside the broad, quiet river, by which one can penetrate three thousand miles into the interior. The vessel is gliding quickly down stream. On the lower deck the thickly-packed cattle stamp and low. A negro somewhere is strumming a guitar. All sit down to dinner at a long table. The English engineer is at your right and the retired German merchant and a negro balatá trader at your left.

The latter has secured an enormous concession on rubber-trees in the interior of Paragua, and, though he has made a fortune at the business, has gotten more now than he can handle. He is going to London to try and make a company to take over his property.

There is no discrimination at this festive board as to race, or colour, or previous condition of servitude. Only one per cent. of the Venezuelan people are recorded as pure white, and in the most

aristocratic circles the black of Africa is mixed with the blue of Castile. The most common mixture is white and Indian, of which two-thirds of the inhabitants, the mestizo, are composed. Mulattos are fairly common, and Zambos, negro and Indian half-breeds, less so. There is every possible permutation of these race mixtures.

The English engineer between the courses tells the tale of the Callao Mine.

"About 1860 some Yankees from California came here and began to pan gold. They founded the Callao Mine, and a French company was organized and bought it. After a few years' work the company became insolvent, and, to eke along, paid tradesmen script redeemable in shares. A thousand pesos' worth of shares would be bought then for 50 pesos. The great vein was struck shortly after, and for years shares of 1,000 pesos produced 72,000 pesos. One Trinidad negro

boatman, who kept a cookshop, sold a few shares given him for a board bill. He is to-day one of the rich men of Trinidad.

"In 1895 the main lode was lost. No reserve of money had been kept to explore with, and the company went permanently bankrupt."

The German trader, Herr Müller, who is going back to the old country to finish his days in quiet, has been for twenty years in Bolivar, starting as clerk with Blohm & Cie. He has studied the trade of the country with characteristic German thoroughness.

"Venezuela is a country enormously rich, principally in coffee, cocoa, balatá, rubber, hides, and cattle. Even now the balance of trade is in her favour—eighty million dollars of exports to fifty millions of imports. Guiana has a population of only fifty thousand—two to the square mile—over an area as large as the British

Isles. These countries are nothing to what they could be. The llanos will support a hundred times more cattle if only they are bred instead of neglected. Our neighbour speaks of the Callao. There are other mines just as rich if people had the capital to work them."

We adjourn to a corner of the deck and light up some Havana cigarettes. The owner of the cattle on the lower deck, who is taking them to Trinidad for sale, joins us. The German puts to him the problem of stocking the llanos.

"You talk about breeding better cattle," he says. "I know all about that business, but what good does it do me if I import bulls and make an enclosure and breed good cattle? They are the first ones that will be shot by the next revolution. If the cattle range wild it is harder to steal them. But even thus the *insurrectos* got away with three hundred head from my estate last time.

"And such ridiculous laws!" he continues. "There is one that you must not kill a cow. How many cows have infectious diseases and should be killed? There's another law that barbed-wire fences should have seven wires. Don't I know how many wires my fences should have as well as those crooked lawyers in Caracas?"

"And how can foreign capital come into this country and open up the mines?" chimes in the engineer. "You ought to see our costs. A hundred and fifty dollars a ton to transport goods 60 miles! To get out of the country I have to secure a permit in San Felix and one in Bolivar too. The negroes down the river have to hand out graft for every time they move. Why, the carters to the Callao Mine have to pay 120 pesos a year, a tax greater than the largest sized motor-car pays in England. All our supplies have to go up to Bolivar first and then be brought back

to the mine. A narrow-gauge railway from San Felix would open out the country. Will they allow it? No. Fifteen years ago a route was planned and marked on Guzman Blanco's map as 'under construction.' They say the railroad must start from Bolivar.

"And graft, graft!" he continues. "Mining machinery is free of duty by the Code, which is ideal on paper. But you have to pay the Customs first and then get the money back. A miner up here a while ago paid four hundred dollars in duties, and before he got it back he had expended one hundred dollars for stamps and fees. Why, up at Callao we send telegrams instead of letters, because the dispatch fees go to the salary of the local Commandante, and he has to be taken care of. It is all right so long as you spend money in Venezuela, but God help you if you make any!"

"But this Government is all right,"

protests the American promoter; "it is safe to invest here now. Of course, the officials get their little pickings for their trouble, but since Venezuela was made to give up all that money after the Hague decision, a foreigner's property is safe. Since Gomez has become President trade has increased 15 per cent."

"That is because it was nothing during Matos's Revolution and Castro's troubles," interrupts the German. "But those indemnities hit pretty hard, it is true. The whole Customs receipts are less than four million dollars, and nearly two and a half millions go to the indemnities and the foreign debts."

"They will not let capital be brought in either," grumbles the English traveller. "I had an idea there might be openings here for manufacturing, and I looked the situation over. Matches you buy in Venezuela for 20 cents a dozen boxes, of far worse quality than those in Trinidad,

and the boxes are not full. At Trinidad they cost 10 cents, and that is dear enough. But can you start a factory here? Not much! because a distinguished official in Caracas owns stock in the match factory which makes these *fósforos*, whose heads fly off and burn your clothes. Salt sells at Bolivar with the largest official discount, which, by the way, you do not get, for a cent and a fifth a pound. At Curaçoa it is quoted at three-tenths of a cent. But can you sell salt? Not much! It is a Government monopoly. The distinguished official in Caracas owns three-fourths of the stock in this steamer company, which has the concession for selling salt. And this Compania Fluvial has the sole right to navigate the Macareo passage. Any competing line has to go up the Pedernales passage and spend twelve hours longer getting to Bolivar, if, indeed, it does not run onto the bar and stick there like the 'Apure.'"

The cattle merchant chimes in: "We want a man like Diaz." He shakes his fist, "With a sword!"

The American promoter protests:—

"We do not want a *machetero;* we want an administrator who will ally himself with capital. The Government would become good if capital came in and people had work. There are too many *guapos,* too many *bravos.*"

"But how can it come?" interrupts the Englishman. "Will the distinguished gentleman in Caracas give up his salt concession and the matches or the cigarettes, or the Orinoco Navigation Company, or the Maracaibo steamers? Where can capital go? When it enters, the Government or the revolution runs off with it. You have a mine with four hundred men. The Presidente sends word: 'There is danger of a revolution; I must have those men for my army.' What can you do?"

The promoter is bellicose.

"If I had a railroad with two thousand four hundred men I would arm them and fight anybody who tried to take them away, Government or revolution. The Asphalt Company at Pitch Lake has its men armed and does that."

"But they got their property taken away after they had spent two hundred thousand dollars to help Matos beat Castro," comments the mine manager.

"Well," says the promoter, "did not Castro have a reason to take their lake away? They stole it in the first place, anyway. I know, because I took part in the revolution and we had great sums of money. A British war-vessel stopped me, but when the officer saw my papers he let me through; Castro took the steamer line away from the Americans, too. They gave twenty-five thousand dollars to the revolution. The Yankees would have been all right if they had left politics alone."

"THE DELTA"

The German grows placative: "This Government is not so very bad. It wouldn't be, that is, if only the distinguished official you mention was not so interested in cattle. He will be in an important conference with foreign representatives, when a servant comes and says, 'The old cow has had a calf.' Up he jumps, and says, 'Excuse me,' and does not come back for three days. He is just a cattle-man."

"That is what the Venezuelan people like," says the ranchman. "Well, I hear up Apure way there may be trouble any minute." He lowers his voice mysteriously: "The Old One is in Colombia, it is said."

"Pish!" says the promoter; "he is all eaten up with tumours and is in the Canary Islands."

"Well," says the cattle man, "I have been told by our agent in Trinidad to keep my eyes and ears wide open."

"There is another," adds the promoter.

"The lame one?"

"Yes, the lame señor. The most popular man in Venezuela. I have heard from the inside that he is to be President when there is the next trouble. There will be an intervention by the United States and an entirely free election, with inspectors, and he will be elected, and he is an absolutely honest and patriotic man. Twice before he could have been President, by treachery, and he would not. I should like to see the Presidente of the State of Bolivar go higher. He is most diplomatic. He says, 'The roads are my monument.'"

"He made Gomez President," adds the German. "You know Castro was away in Paris, and he sent word to the Cabinet to proclaim that the country needed his return. One of the Ministers offered this motion. Then the General stood up and said, 'Is Castro to treat us

as children who cannot run the country?' And Perez said the same. So Castro was not recalled. But General Telleria took ship next day to the United States and stayed there two years. He is a good man."

"We have another revolution coming soon, anyway," says the cattle-man. "One trouble in the country is we have too many officials, and they change always. Of course, it is necessary to reward those who have fought well, so what else can be done? I have seen revolutions start. Somebody who has been driven out, or who has influence in some State, will get together a thousand or so brave fighters —*guapos*. Other men in the district, restless, or with a grudge, send in to him and say: 'I control three hundred men. They are yours if I can be Custom House collector of San Felix,' or, 'I have a hundred; I would be Prefect of Police of Barcelona.' The leader is glad to get

allies and pledges the posts. These prospective officials promise smaller places and rewards to their men, and thus the army is made. To foreigners the leader generally promises concessions and so gets money. With a force and some cash he marches to the capital. Matos had sixteen thousand men against Castro's six thousand. I was with Castro that day in the steeple of the Church of Ascencion. Matos' men none of them wanted to die. Castro said that morning, 'I win,' and his regular soldiers went through the insurgents like a mad bull.

"When a revolting general wins, as Castro did before he came into the Presidency, he marches to Caracas with his army from the backwoods, and meets a crowd of thievish lawyers, who have been Ministers, and know the ways of graft and of the Government. When the victorious general is made Acting President, they adroitly get into the new Ministry,

and show him how to conduct a pretended election before declaring himself 'Presidente Constitucional.' Now the time comes for the redemption of promises to his henchmen.

"Some of the chiefs get their appointments; and at once their enemies flee to Trinidad to escape alive. The new officials take their goods. The men driven out are crazily angry and desperate, and ready to join the next revolution.

"The slick lawyers get to the new President, and say such and such a one is not fit to be Commandante of the promised port. 'He is a good fighter,' they allow, 'a *guapo*, but he is a rough neck. He cannot fill that job—put in such another.' So the President tells his officer who had the pledge to wait a little while, or he appoints some one and says it is only temporary, or he offers something else. So the man waits and waits, getting

angrier and angrier, and his lieutenants call on him to fulfil his own promises, which he cannot do. Finally he goes home with a burning heart, ripe also for the next revolution. The President seizes all the concessions and monopolies he can, to hire his own soldiers and keep himself President. So it goes.

"The country needs a new Diaz," he concludes. "Old General Guzman Blanco was like Diaz. Truly he was ridiculous with the statues he built to himself, plastered over with the title of 'El Illustre Americano.' Yet he allowed nobody to steal but himself, and the country was the most prosperous it has ever been."

The Jefe Civil is near and seems to be listening.

"Tenga ciudado," whispers the promoter. The conversation stops abruptly.

"Those trees along the bank are very beautiful," says the cattle-man.

The scene along the river really is

magnificent. The water-rushes rise like a lawn from the water's edge. Behind is tall grass several feet high, then stretches the irregular line of the trees.

The Englishman does not care who hears him. "Say what you please," he proclaims, "on one side of a ten-mile strait is a province as large as Prussia lavishly rich in untouched natural resources, without a mile of railway, without a decent road, without industries or anything but the most elementary agriculture, supporting a poverty-stricken population of less than sixty thousand. On the other side of the channel is a little island fifty miles square with railroads, trolleys, factories, oil-fields, roads like boulevards, supporting in peace and prosperity two hundred and eighty thousand people. The Flag means thus much, anyway."

"Give Venezuela a fair chance," protests the American, "Guiana will come out all right yet."

"You can make money here, anyway," says the German in a conspicuously loud voice. "The English have nothing to complain of, if they don't ship through Trinidad and have to pay the 30 per cent. surtax. They sold three million dollars' worth of manufactures, goods, and cottons, to Venezuela, and the Germans sold two millions only; the United States lose out here. They send nothing but wheat, patent medicines, and a lot of catalogues which nobody reads. They have not sense enough to send commercial travellers speaking Spanish down with samples. But the States buy most of the exports and send gold coin back."

In the evening we see the lights of San Felix, and the Jefe Civil and the Commandante are rowed ashore. Later we reach Barrancas, and take on board a dark-coloured family consisting of a bearded local magnate, his wife, and three *señoritas*.

You go to bed to the sound of the thrashing of the stern paddles and wake to the cry of the parrots screeching in the jungle alongside. The vessel ploughs northward through the morning mist. You stroll around the decks, watching for monkeys in the trees upon the bank.

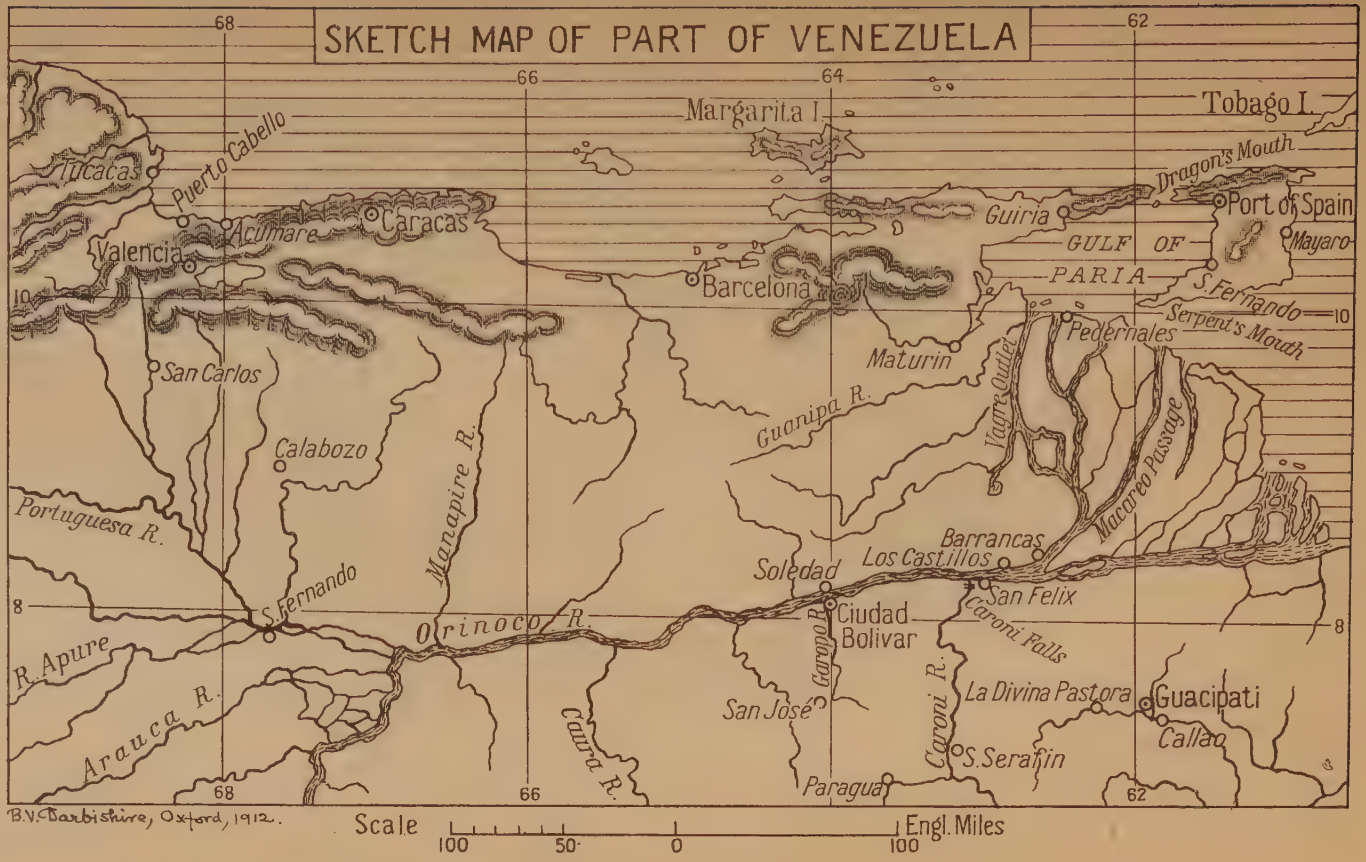
One of the *señoritas*, aided and abetted by her sister, seems to be having an incipient flirtation with a young Venezuelan. You pick up on the deck, fortuitously, a piece of paper evidently intended for him. On it is written in a delicate feminine hand :—

"Señor X. 1. Espérame. 2. Me esperas? 3. Espérame pronto."

You slip it to the Venezuelan, who is properly grateful, though a little perplexed at the selection of yourself as intermediary.

The mangrove-trees of the Delta mouth appear now, pierced by an occasional narrow caño, and here and there, rarely,

the thatch of a Guarano Indian's hut. The choppy water of the mouth of the Macareo passage is passed. The mangrove coast slowly fades away. We pass the Soldado rock with its menacing line of breakers and enter the Serpent's Mouth —of sinister memories both. The hills of Trinidad appear soon. They are clearly defined, with the regularly laid out coconut trees of the plantations at their feet. White houses peep out between the palms. Just as the sun is sinking over the distant hills, we cast anchor in Port of Spain close beside the Royal Dutch West India Mail Steamer bound to-morrow for New York.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Dragon's Mouth
Port of Spain
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S. Fernando
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Vagre Outlet
Macareo Passage
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Guanipa R.
Manapire R.
Portuguesa R.
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Los Castillos
Soledad
San Felix
Ciudad Bolivar
Caroni Falls
S. Fernando
Orinoco R.
R. Apure
Arauca R.
Caura R.
Garopo R.
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Caroni R.
La Divina Pastora
Guacipati
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S. Serafin
Paragua
B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1912.
Scale
100
50
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100
Engl. Miles

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